The Reminiscences of a First Whipper-in.

J. C. Osborne

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THE SEDGEFIELD COUNTRY IN . . THE SEVENTIES . AND EIGHTIES .

HON. G. HAMILTON RUSSELL.

The

Sedgefield Country

in the Seventies and Eighties, with the Reminiscences of a First Whipper-in.

Written and Compiled
by the Author of the
FOX-HUNTERS' "VADE MECUM."

THIRD EDITION,
New and Revised, with additional
Stories and Notes.

DARLINGTON:
WM. DRESSER & SONS
—
1904.

The DARLINGTON
— PRESS. —

To The Honourable

GUSTAVUS WILLIAM HAMILTON-RUSSELL, M.F.H.

(Master of the South Durham Foxhounds),

This book is respectfully dedicated, not in the spirit of a "Laudator Temporis acti," but of one who appreciates his disinterested efforts to promote good sport and good fellowship.

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PREFACE.

THE desire to assist, in his declining years, an old servant, who for fifteen seasons worked hard in the hunting field, combined with a frequently expressed wish on the part of many who participated in the sport during the time that John—or as he was always termed, "Jack"—Bevans acted as first whipper-in to the South Durham fox-hounds, that some of his quaint sayings and doings should be collected as a memento of pleasant days spent by them in the hunting field, prompted the writer to undertake this little work, which has been carried out at spare intervals, when time and circumstances permitted. Owing to the pressure of other work, it has of necessity been performed somewhat hurriedly, but when opportunity occurred, Bevans' own account of the various incidents in his career have been committed to paper exactly as he narrated them; the language made use of has, in every case, been that of his own adoption, varying as it may appear from time to time; but the keener the interest he took in any event during its narration, the more natural became his manner of expressing himself, especially when he was unable to restrain a pardonable excitement in recording some unusually funny adventure in the field, or occurrence which appealed to his ever predominant sense of humour.

On his retirement from the hunting field in 1889, a sum of £69 13s. 6d. was collected on his behalf in small amounts from members of the hunt, friends, and tenant farmers, with whom he was always a great favourite; with a portion of this (£38 13s. 4d.) he was made a free life member of that admirable institution, the Hunt Servants' Benefit Society, entitling him to a weekly allowance of 15/- in case of illness or accident, and his family to £150 on his death, and the remainder has been doled out to him annually in sums of £2 at a time, or thereabouts; the last and final payment having just been made.

Possibly this humble narrative may be the means of continuing this dole for a few years longer, when its object will have been fully attained. On the other hand, it may prove disappointing to readers who expect something more sensational; but, whatever the result, it has at least afforded infinite pleasure to the compiler, whose memory is carried back so vividly to innumerable happy days spent in the saddle in company of those good sportsmen to whom reference is frequently made—some of them, alas, have left our midst but the majority may still be found amongst us, at any rate, in private life, whilst a goodly band yet gathers by the covert side eager as in days gone by.

The notes at bottom of pages throughout the book are written by the author.

CHAPTER I.

"No keener hunter after glory breathes."

A COMPLETE HISTORY of fox-hunting in the County of Durham, from the time that the celebrated Ralph Lambton* first assumed the *role* of M.F.H. in the Sedgefield country one hundred years ago, until the division of the district hunted by the Durham County hounds into North and South, in 1872, with Mr. Anthony Lax Maynard at the head of affairs in the North and Mr. John Harvey master in the South, would doubtless afford pleasant reading to many hunting men, particularly to those of the old school. The books and records relating to much that occurred during the earlier part of the century, are in the possession of the writer,

* Mr. Ralph John Lambton had, previous to 1804, hunted a portion of the Raby country. In 1793, Mr. W H. Lambton, brother of Mr. Ralph and father of the first Earl of Durham, wrote to a great-uncle of Mr. Marshall Fowler, alluded to later on, asking that gentleman to assist him and his brother in establishing a pack of hounds, which was done in the above year. A portion of the Raby country is omitted from the transactions of the Raby Hunt in 1793, and it is fair to presume that Lord Darlington had given that portion, so omitted, to Mr. Lambton, as was afterwards done with the Sedgefield country in 1804.

whose great-uncle was Hon. Secretary to the Lambton Hunt during the whole of its existence in the Sedgefield country, and may, at some future time, be called upon to display their interesting contents; but for the present purpose, it is not intended to make more than a cursory allusion to events that are not connected with the life and times of Mr. John Harvey, the first Master of the South Durham Foxhounds, and of his successors, until the year 1889, when the subject of the reminiscences, hereinafter recorded, completed his fifteen years' service with the South Durham Hunt.

Mr. Ralph John Lambton showed wonderful sport in the Sedgefield country, hunting the hounds himself for the greater part of the time until the spring of 1838, when he met with the fearful accident* which caused his retirement from the sport which he had so long adorned, and incapacitated him from again appearing in the hunting field.

It need not be said that the grief of the members of the Hunt was open and unsuppressed; a fearful calamity had befallen them, the loss of the one man who for nearly forty years had hunted the country in a style befitting the sport, at practically his own expense.†

The mantle of Mr. Ralph Lambton fell upon one of his most ardent disciples, Mr. William Williamson, better known as "Billy" Williamson, who was elected to the Mastership

* Mr. Lambton had a terrible fall in 1825, which nearly resulted in his death, and incapacitated him from hunting the hounds until 1827, when he had recovered sufficiently to be able to do so. Meanwhile, John Winter became huntsman and Robert Hunnum (better known as "Bob") first whipper-in. Another fall in 1829 prevented him from taking the command, and he never after this officiated as regular huntsman, though he did a good part of the Covert work and very materially assisted his huntsman during the course of a run. In March, 1838, he practically broke his back by a fall from his favourite mare in a blind ditch, and, though unable to hunt any longer, lived more or less crippled until 1844, when he died lamented by every hunting man and good sportsman in the kingdom.

† The largest sum ever collected by the Hon. Sec. of the Lambton Hunt was in the Season 1834-5, the amount being only £402 17s. 0d.

of the hounds in May, 1838, a position which he held for three years, when the state of his finances (he being about to take unto himself a wife) unfortunately prevented him from continuing to hold the reins of office. John Glover was huntsman to Mr. Williamson. In 1842-3, the Marquis of Londonderry was Master, keeping the hounds at Wynyard, with the title of the Wynyard and South Durham Foxhounds, with Arrowsmith as huntsman and showing capital sport, which would doubtless have continued but for a serious accident* which necessitated his retiring in favour of Mr. William Russell, who, with J. Swinburne as huntsman, had been hunting the country of which Brancepeth was more or less the centre, extending as it did from Lanchester and Plawsworth, on the north-west and north-east, to Witton Castle (or further west) on the south-west, and to Sunderland Bridge and Spennymoor on the south-east. This wild country, which comprises all the best part of the present North Durham country to the west of Durham City, had been hunted by him at any rate since 1839 (probably since the enforced retirement of Mr. R. Lambton in 1838), and to judge from Swinburne's diary, kindly lent me by the Hon. G. Hamilton-Russell, M.F.H. (grand-nephew of Mr. William Russell), the sport must have been wonderfully good.

In 1844, Mr. Russell was anxious to abandon the cares of mastership, and Mr. John Henderson, of Durham, conceived the happy idea of purchasing the hounds for £300 and forming

* His Lordship, who was the third Marquis of Londonderry and companion in arms of Wellington, unfortunately broke his arm in 1843, over a blind fence at Oxeye, on the north side of the road. This was witnessed by Mr. Marshall Fowler, who was mounted on his little chestnut mare, "Fanny." Squire Sutton, late of Elton, was also out "as a kid on a pony" that day. Fortunately, just as the accident occurred, old Dr. Alcock (predecessor of the late Dr. Charles Trotter) drove up in his gig and administered aid. The Marquis of Londonderry bore all the expenses of the Hunt, and from the days of Mr. Ralph Lambton, says Mr. Harvey in frequent letters, "All the family, be it remembered, were the most liberal supporters we've had by far." He died March 6th, 1854.

a pack to be called the Durham County Foxhounds, though he had no ambition at the time to become Master of the Hunt; he was in fact working on behalf of a triumvirate, consisting of Colonel Tower,* Mr. William Russell, and Lord Seaham (father of the present Marquis of Londonderry), of whom Colonel Tower was appointed field-master; the triumvirate lasted, in name only, for a year or two, as Colonel Tower soon became, for all practical purposes, sole master of the Durham County Foxhounds; though he received much valuable assistance in the kennels, stables, and finance from Mr. Henderson, who might well be termed the father of the Durham County Hunt. Colonel Tower carried on the Hunt with credit to himself and the country until 1852. During a considerable portion of the time Messrs. John and George Gregson acted as Honorary Secretaries, though, at one period, Colonel Tower acknowledged the subscriptions himself. On Colonel Tower's retirement, Mr. "Billy" Williamson undertook a second mastership, which, like its predecessor, lasted but for a short period, viz., from 1853 to 1856; Mr. John Harvey, of Newcastle, becoming Hon. Secretary for the Sedgefield country. Mr. John Henderson acted as M.F.H. in 1856-7; and Major Johnson, with Tom Harrison as huntsman and William Snaith as whipper-in, succeeded in office until 1860, when William Snaith took the place of Tom Harrison† (who died) as huntsman, In 1861, Major Johnson retired and his place was again filled by Mr. John Henderson‡ (father of Mr. C. W. C. Henderson, who hunted so much in the South Durham country in Mr. Harvey's time,

* Colonel Tower was father of Mr. H. J. Baker-Baker, of Elemore Hall, who assumed the name of Baker-Baker on succeeding to the property, and grandfather of Mr. J. F. Baker-Baker and Captain Baker, R.N., both well known in the hunting field.

† Tom Harrison, better known as "Little Tom." His real name was John Harrison, and owing to mental depression, caused by loss of his eyesight, he hanged himself in the feeding-house at the kennels, on October 15th, 1860.

‡ Mr. John Henderson was buried April 10th, 1884, two days only after Mr. "Billy" Williamson.

and who is frequently alluded to later on). Mr. John Henderson had fifty couples of hounds, with Will Snaith as huntsman and Thomas Prosser as first whipper-in. *The Field*, of Nov. 2nd, 1861, speaking of Hunt changes, says: "Major Johnson retires from the Durham County and Mr. J. Henderson has accepted the mastership with an increased exchequer, and a country enlarged and improved by an addition of the Raby country.‡ Mr. John Henderson only retained the sole mastership for one year, another Committee taking the helm in 1862 and hunting four days a week, with W. Snaith as huntsman and Stephen Winkworth as first whipper-in; Prosser having gone to Boxall in Kilkenny. In 1863, Messrs. J. Henderson and John Harvey were joint masters, hunting four days a week, with Martin Care as huntsman and Stephen Winkworth as first whipper-in, Will Snaith having gone to hunt the Hon. Mark Rolle's hounds. In 1867, Thomas Dowdeswell came as huntsman from Lord Macclesfield's. This *regime* lasted until 1872, when the country was divided into the North and South Durham Hunts. Mr. John Henderson then retired and Mr. John Harvey accepted the mastership of the South Durham hounds; Mr. Anthony Lax Maynard being appointed to the same position in the North country.

When the division of the country took place the Hunt was indebted in the sum of over £1,000, but this was provided for by the sale of the horses and a special whip.

The subject of the division of the country had long been mooted, it being a very extensive one, and somewhat unwieldy to be properly served by a single pack of foxhounds, but the idea had always been shelved until a solution of the

‡ The Duke of Cleveland generously offered to divide his country in this year, between the Durham County and Hurworth Hunts, and to subscribe £500 per annum to each Hunt, an offer which could not be accepted in its entirety.

difficulty was brought about in a somewhat singular and drastic manner. An attack of that terrible scourge, dumb-madness, seized upon the pack, and the whole of the hounds, with the exception of a few couples (including "Bachelor," depicted in Mr. Harvey's presentation picture), which were, as puppies, out at walk at the time, had perforce to be destroyed; thus a new pack, or packs of hounds, having to be collected, the opportunity for a division of the country was taken, and Mr. John Harvey, in spite of already advancing years, set about himself, with the energy of a young man, to repair the breach. It might be of interest to give a short history of the case, which is taken from the letter of one most competent to judge. The pack of forty-one couples commenced the season of 1871 under the most promising auspices, with a country splendidly stocked with foxes, and every prospect of success; but, alas! for human calculations, a check came, and every hope, apparently so well founded, was destroyed by a visitation as sudden as it was unexpected. In the latter part of October, 1871, after a very good and severe run, Dowdeswell observed a fine young hound, called "Carver," by Lord Macclesfield's "Foiler," going from hound to hound in a very unusual manner. Taking alarm he had the hound led home, and, by direction, kept confined in a place by himself in order to prove the nature of the disease, which increased in intensity; and on the third day the dog was perfectly mad, snapping at and biting everything he could reach. Four hounds, which he had previously bitten, were at once put down. On a *post mortem* examination, the stomach was found in an extreme state of irritation and full of extraneous matter, such as straw, chips of wood, etc. This was of course sufficiently alarming, and those in charge of the pack watched anxiously

for any unpleasant symptoms among the other hounds. All went well for a fortnight; then two bitches were seized on successive days with a disease in the throat, which prevented them swallowing, and was accompanied by a loss of the use of the lower jaw. These were treated by blistering the throat with doses of calomel, and feeding them, as well as could be accomplished, with strong broth and stimulants by means of the horn. Both died. On a *post mortem* examination, all the parts appeared in a natural condition, but there was a mucous covering in the throat, the general appearance of the internal organs being similar to that when death is caused by suffocation. A few days elapsed and other hounds were seized in precisely the same manner, all dying in about three or four days. As a rule, the hounds so attacked were quite harmless, following the huntsman and apparently grateful for anything done for them. The attacks continued, and some few began to show signs of rabies. The general features of the disease were, however, what is usually called dumb-madness, which, beyond doubt, is contagious in its character; and seeing that no hound once attacked ever recovered, the decision come to was to put them down immediately on the first appearance of the symptoms, in order to avoid infection. Up to November 23rd, about nine couples had been attacked and died, the disease still running on. Of course hunting was suspended, and the Committee, feeling deeply their responsibility, called a meeting of the subscribers in Durham, on Monday, November 27th, to take into consideration the proper course to be adopted under these painful circumstances. The question to be decided was, whether looking at the danger to life and the uncertainty as to any known mode of cure, the pack should be destroyed, or an attempt be made to stamp out the disease by isolating

every hound. Up to Saturday, November 25th, it was thought that the latter plan might be adopted and tried with safety; but the Monday morning's report showed the attack on several more hounds had assumed unmistakable symptoms of rabies. This fact induced the meeting to come to an unanimous resolution: "That it was a duty they owed to the country to sacrifice the whole of their gallant pack, and to appeal to masters of hounds, for a few hounds to enable them to finish the season so disastrously cut short."

This resolution was at once carried out, and the whole pack was destroyed forthwith. Such a calamity as this would have broken the heart of many a Master of Hounds, but Mr. Harvey and Mr. Henderson were not made of ordinary stuff, and no sooner had the fiat gone forth than they immediately bestirred themselves to get together a scratch pack, which, owing to the generosity of numerous Masters of Hounds, soon became an accomplished fact. The last remnant of the pack was put down on November 28th, yet, thanks to the energy of the masters and the alacrity with which their appeal was responded to on all sides, a new pack was got together in less than a month, no less than seventy-five couples of hounds having been actually delivered at the Sedgefield kennels; and on New Year's Day, 1872, they met at Alden Grange, in the northern part of their country, and killed, to their credit be it said, a leash of foxes.

Mr. John Henderson's own account of what took place in the kennels and the field, during the next few months, is so graphic and attractive that it is inserted here in full. "I will commence by stating what was done in disinfecting our kennels. First, carbolic acid was freely used; then the lodging houses and other buildings (every crevice being closed) were twice stoved with burning sulphur; afterwards,

the walls were more than once whitewashed with quicklime, which was allowed to remain on them a few weeks. The benches, feeding troughs, and all utensils were taken out and replaced by new ones. Lastly, all the wood paling and doors had a thick coating of hot gas tar, mixed with quicklime, which formed a perfect japan. Every portion of the premises used by the hounds was treated in this manner; and though the disease has been rife* in the district, I am happy to say no case of dumb-madness or rabies has made its appearance in the new pack.

The hounds contributed by the liberality of fully forty masters of hounds were, by Dowdeswell's unremitting attention soon got under command. We took the field with the dog pack on New Year's Day, and killed a leash of foxes; since then they have been constantly at work, and though, as was naturally to be expected, there was a good deal of jealousy among them, with the exception of some that would not run up, and a little want of steadiness, they have done very fairly. Luck has not favoured them much, as several times after very good runs, when they were fairly entitled to blood, their fox has escaped by the narrowest hairs-breadth, but on the whole, they have shown much better sport than could possibly have been expected. A perfect pack of fox-hounds, however, is not to be got together in two or three months; but, looking at the bitch pack, which is as even and good-looking as is seen in most old establishments, it is evident, with a little judicious drafting and a few more entries—some of the best blood in the kingdom furnishing the nucleus—there ought to be little difficulty, in a few years,

* Two terriers, belonging to a member of the Author's family, died on the same day of dumb-madness, about this time. They succumbed in a few hours to the attack and were perfectly harmless throughout.

in producing a satisfactory result. It may be interesting to those who have given attention to the peculiarities of the disease which attacked our pack, to read a letter received a short time ago from a friend in India, to whom a draft of four couples of our hounds were sent early in September last. 'Bangalore, January 17th, 1872,—I was very sorry to see in the home papers of the very bad luck you have had with the hounds. Can you kindly tell me what the symptoms of the disease were, and the general result of any *post mortems* you made? I ask you to do this, as all the hounds I got from England this year (fourteen couples) have died of something which has baffled everyone here, doctors and vets. included. The four couples I got from the Durham country were the first attacked, then two couples of Cradock's, and afterwards, eight couples I bought in London. The sick hounds were kept entirely separate from the others, and as I said before, the disease was one which we here were not acquainted with.' The hounds would arrive in India about the same time as we had our first case, and the symptoms, I have heard from another source, were loss of the use of the lower jaw and power of swallowing—in fact, precisely the same as in our hounds; thus proving, of which before there was but little doubt, that the disease lies dormant in the system a considerable time, and that it is both infectious and contagious. The four couples were impregnated with the disease when they left our kennels; the other hounds during the passage out caught the infection, and, notwithstanding all the care afforded them, the result was the same as here—they all died.'"

CHAPTER II.

"Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam,
Our first best country ever is at home."

IN May, 1872, Mr. Harvey entered upon the Mastership of the South Durham Hounds, with Thomas Dowdeswell (who had been the Durham County huntsman since 1867) as huntsman, and Thomas Morton as whipper-in; the pack consisted of thirty-two couples of hounds, the intention being to hunt the country five days a fortnight. Mr. Anthony Lax Maynard aspired to three days a week in the North Durham country, which was just now particularly well supplied with foxes; and Henry Haverson, who had been first whipper-in with Lord Eglinton's and the Bedale, had charge of his thirty-five couples of hounds; Thomas Noble and William Hawkswell officiating as whips. The meets were advertized for 10-30 a.m., Mr. Maynard being essentially an early man, and not inferior to Mr. Harvey in powers of endurance—indeed he was a fine all-round man, whose motto was *Suaviter in modo fortiter in re*; a good quick shot, and an excellent judge of a horse, so much so that he was in great request at Agricultural Shows, where he constantly officiated in the ring, to the satisfaction of exhibitors. Mr. Harvey used to joke about Mr. Maynard's name, and

often said they call him Lax,‡ but he 's anything but slack in the hunting field!

Mr. Maynard, showing excellent sport all round, officiated as Master of the North Durham Hunt for twelve years, when a Committee followed for four years, and then Mr. J. E. Rogerson, in 1888, assumed the command, a position which he has held ever since to the satisfaction of all concerned in the fortunes of the hunt. Dick Freeman has been huntsman for many years now, and is said to be as game as ever.

But our interest is centred for the time being rather in the fortunes of the South Durham Hunt, and right good sport the scratch pack, which was now a year old, showed in January, 1873. On Monday, the 13th, they met at Stotfold, at 12 o'clock. Mr. Harvey, who had been confined to the house through illness, not being able to be present. Found at once at Brierton whin, and, after a ring by Dalton Piercy back to the covert, raced their fox away in the direction of Cole Hill; thence by Quaker's Gill to Embleton, through Close Wood, Newton Hansard, skirting Lumpley, and on past the Tile Sheds into Brierley plantation and Layton Lings, where reynard dwelt not a second; across the Stockton road into Watts' plantation, through Homer Carr, and up to Hely House, where the first welcome check occurred; but, "forr'ard away" was quickly heard and the pace was not slow past Diamond Hall, through Mordon plantation, and Fir Tree Hill wood, to Hardwick Hall, where this stout fox went to ground in the earths opposite the decoy at 3-30, after a run of just over three hours; just before going

‡ The Author was on the Grand Jury, at Durham Assizes, a few years ago, when the Clerk of Assize called out Anthony *Fox* Maynard, to his own discomfiture and the great amusement of the Court. It was a very foggy morning.

to ground he lay flat down on his side, and was viewed in this position by one of the keepers, on whose approach he crawled into the earth.

The present Marquis of Londonderry (then Viscount Castlereagh,* and at Christ Church, Oxford), Lord Henry Vane Tempest, General Hardinge, Mr. Launcelot Rolleston,† Captain Davison and his son Tom, Mr. Ord (who had just left Oxford and was riding old "Clinkiron," a noted performer at Sedgefield Steeplechases), Mr. C. W. C. Henderson,‡ and Major Allison enjoyed the sport that day, and will not have forgotten this extraordinary gallop. No other occasion occurs to my mind of hounds racing right through all the Wynyard woods without a check, and with scent breast-high. Though thirty-one years have elapsed since this memorable day—

"And though as swift as lightning's flash,
Those blessed moments flew;
Not all the waves of time shall wash
Their memory from my view."

The Bedale hounds had also brilliant sport from Kirby Hill on this day, with two runs of twenty-five minutes each and one of an hour and forty minutes, finishing in the darkness. The meet was at Newbeggin, on Wednesday, January 15th, an unusual day for this part of the country, but the appointment was no doubt made to meet the wishes of the Marquis of Londonderry, who, with his usual generosity, had expressed a wish that the hounds should meet at Wynyard Park on the Friday, and be entertained to breakfast. There was a great crowd from all parts at the meet, including

* Master of the Hurworth Hounds, 1873-5.

† Master of the South Notts Hounds, 1876-1882.

‡ Son of Mr. John Henderson, and father of Lieutenant Henderson, who so pluckily saved Beames' (Tynedale Huntsman) life in December last, when well nigh drowned.

Viscount Castlereagh, Lord Henry Vane Tempest, General Hardinge, Mr. Rolleston, Captain Joe Fife, Major Allison, Messrs. G. Waldy, R. Johnson, etc. Fox Hill covert was first called upon, and provided one of the stoutest foxes *that has ever left its well-known shelter.* "He left on the north side," to quote the words of one who saw every inch of the run (the writer not being present that day), "and with a capital and improving scent, ran past Pitfield to Mr. Trotter's preserves at Woogrey; thence across the Bishopton road to Lee Close, skirting which, he turned eastwards over the Stillington bottom and beck to Bishopton whin; disdaining that shelter, he passed Redmarshall on the left, and turning south, made his point to Jack Sutton's coverts. About this time up jumped a fresh fox in the middle of a fallow field, but, with the exception of two hounds, the pack took no notice of him, and the whipper-in being handy, all were soon on the right line again. We were now at Elton, where our fox was headed, and pointed for Mr. Page's farm and Howden Hall, where he turned west again, and went nearly to Redmarshall, and thence by Two Mile Houses to Hartburn earths. Not finding sanctuary there, he made the best of his way back to Sutton's whin, thence to Clement's whin and on to Carlton Carrs, where he was viewed and holloaed back. Again he skirted Clement's whin, then made his way through Grey's plantation to Hardwick farm and Two Mile Houses, and hounds finally pulled him down in Sandylees covert, after two hours and twenty-five minutes' continuous and brilliant hunting. Though the line was not straight, and ancient scenes were re-visited, yet no one, who loves hunting for hunting's sake, could have observed better evidence of the wiliness of reynard to defeat his relentless pursuers, of the staunchness and fleetness of

the hounds, which, be it remembered, had been collected from all parts of England exactly twelve months before, and of the indomitable perseverance and skill of Dowdeswell, who, though suffering from the effects of a cropper on the Monday, was never out of his place. How he gets along on the cattle he rides, and keeps his place, is the astonishment of everyone."

On Friday, 17th, the Marquis of Londonderry entertained the Hunt with breakfast, at Wynyard Park, in right gallant style, and, this over, they found, at 11-45, a fox in Whinney Moor, which was lost at Cole Hill after a merry forty minutes; a second fox was found at Lumpley, and it has always been my idea that it was the same fox which afforded such a brilliant run on the Monday previously from Brierton, on which occasion Lumpley was skirted, if not actually touched. At any rate this fox made at first straight for Cole Hill, and then Stotfold, where he turned south, and entered Close wood; Monday's line was now repeated almost wood for wood, and field for field (when in the open) as hounds ran briskly through Newton Hansard past Lumpley; through the Tile shed plantations, Brierley and Layton Lings, crossed the Stockton and Sedgefield road to Watts' plantation, Homer Carr and Hely House, where bold reynard was headed, and set his face for Oldacres, where he was again headed, and struggled on past Ryal farm down to Knotty Hill and Low Hardwick, where he turned and ran to ground, as on the Monday, at the earths in the decoy at Hardwick Hall. This run lasted exactly an hour and three quarters, and terminated a week's sport which, even if it has been equalled (which is very doubtful), has certainly not been excelled during the last thirty years with the South Durham Hounds.

Mr. Harvey, the master, was unfortunately prevented by

illness from participating in any of this sport, but Dowdeswell, whom I have heard described as one of the "galloping, jumping and shouting sort, always in front of his hounds," never showed to better advantage as a huntsman; whatever his faults in the field, it redounded greatly to his credit to show such extraordinary sport with a comparatively scratch pack of hounds, the improvement they had made in twelve months being due entirely to himself. One thing is certain, that, however moderate his horse, no country was too big for him; fall or no fall he would be over or through, and a finer horseman, on a really indifferent hunter, perhaps never crossed a country; he possessed the knack of making his mount, however bad, do his absolute best, and would confidently tackle a fairly stiff bit of country on a horse that most men would have declined to ride over a sheep tray! Unknown to him were the words, when mounted on "Blueskin"—

"Even in a hero's heart
Discretion is the better part."

His voice, like "John Peel's," was loud enough to "awaken the dead!"

It is pleasant to be able to record very fine sport also with the North Durham about this time, the life of their pack being also of but twelve months' duration; proof that with care, knowledge, and unremitting attention on the part of those in charge, a pack of hounds can be collected, and made to work together, and show the best of sport in much less time than anyone, without such data upon which to form an opinion, would possibly imagine. On the 10th February, from Stoney Gate, the North Durham had a grand twenty-five minutes, ending with blood. On the 12th, when they met at Witton Gilbert, they had another fine run of the same duration; "as fast as ever was ridden to," says

one of the hunt, also terminating with a kill in the open; and on the 14th, when the fixture was Brancepeth Castle, they found in that never-failing preserve the Middles and killed near Crook, after skirting Willington, Tanner's Hall, Black Hamilton, Bowden, and Job's Hill—time, an hour and twenty minutes without a check. *The Field* newspaper contains an account of these days' sport also, and the concluding lines may be of interest to some into whose hands this little narrative may fall.

"It would be invidious to mention some of those who went gallantly in any or all of these runs; but it gives the writer pleasure to name Lord Henry Vane Tempest,* who rode straight and well; and also three young ladies, whose hearts and souls seemed in the sport—Miss Teresa Salvin and the Misses Baker Baker of Elemore, grand-children of Colonel Tower."

The season of 1873-4 was not so good a one with the South Durham as might have been anticipated, Dowdeswell unfortunately feeling the effects of the many severe falls which his hard-riding on moderate cattle had brought about, and accordingly he deemed it his duty to retire from the position of huntsman, and gave Mr. Harvey due notice to that effect. Philip Tocock, the whipper-in, also retiring, the Master then cast his eye around for new servants, aud was fortunate in securing the services of William Claxon as huntsman, from the Bicester,‡ where he had acted in the same capacity for two seasons, and previously as first

* From the rest of the field, he came out like a bolt,
And he tackled to work like a schoolboy to play—
As he crammed down his hat and got home in his seat,
This rum one to follow; this bad one to beat!

‡ Claxon left the Bicester in consequence of Lord Valentia undertaking to hunt the hounds himself at least two days a week in future.

whipper-in, when he was well known to Oxford undergraduates, who hunted with Viscount Valentia as "hard-riding Will." He also engaged John Bevans as first whip, under the circumstances narrated by himself, and Charles Hawkes came to fill the position of second whipper-in, there having previously been but one 'whip.' Bevan's own account of the hounds, and all that appertained to them from this period until his retirement in 1879, is so graphic that further allusion to them is almost unnecessary; but there were various changes in the mastership and *regime* of the Hunt during the next decade that require more than passing notice from time to time.

One of the best days near the close of Mr. Harvey's long and eventful career, namely, on January 18th, 1878, is worth recording; and as a very quaint account of it, which appeared in the *South Durham Herald* about this time, is in my possession, it is reproduced here as a specimen of a sporting literary effort of a quarter of a century ago; and showing how rigidly the strict yet unwritten etiquette of fox-hunting was adhered to in bygone days.

A day with the South Durham Foxhounds.—Sir,—On Friday, January 18th, met at Carlton; morning rather hazy; after a white frost. Drew California (Clement's whin) blank. Weather now cleared up, and went to Gray's plantation—drew it blank. I was much amused by a remark made by one of the *right sort* (a very heavy weight) going to draw Gray's plantation—"this is piling on the agony!"* No fox there, we then trotted on to Oxeye but did not find a fox at home. The Master then gave the word to go over and give Squire Sutton a call at Elton, and see if that magnificent specimen of the old English sportsman had a fox in his pre-

* This sounds like Mr. George C. Whitwell, on his old grey mare.

serves. We had hardly entered the genial Squire's park when a welcome holloa back was heard. The worthy Master at once ordered Claxon, the huntsman, forward to the holloa. The hounds were laid on, and went away at once in earnest. No waiting, my boys, or you are quickly left behind. *Forr'ards the word.* The fox takes his line over Elton back lane and Yeoman's farm and on to Hartburn old cover, then shapes his course towards Oxeye, but suddenly bends down towards Sutton's plantations, and then on to Burn wood, and over some very heavy ground to Coatham Stob, and then direct to Burnhope whin, where the fox entered at the low end or thin part of the cover: time up to this point, one hour and ten minutes. Many were now very glad to have a few minutes to blow. Claxon, the huntsman, here showed his excellent generalship, combined with the most gentlemanly feeling for the neighbouring (Hurworth) Hunt, never allowing a hound to enter the thick end of the cover. The gallant pack hearing his continued "whew," stuck to him, and their fox too, and quickly bowled over a grand old fellow —one of the real right sort. Time, one hour and fifty minutes. One of the best (although not the straightest) hunting runs that we have had the pleasure of riding to this season, over a difficult country and several deep and dangerous, though not wide, stells, and the ground heavy going. The scene at the breaking up of the fox was of the most exciting description, and a treat to witness. The dear old master, J. Harvey, Esq., standing in the centre of the pack, looking exceedingly pleased; and the picture of what he is, one of the grandest and most persevering sportsmen in the world. This, some of my readers who are strangers to him, may think is saying too much; but, in the opinion of your correspondent and many who rode in this run, is

not saying enough. One of the straightest goers in the Hunt, full of excitement, with his hat off, and standing near the Master, remarked to some of the many stranger gentlemen: "This is the style we kill our foxes." Claxon, one of the cleverest huntsmen in England, looked as happy as the proverbial sandboy. Long may you live, my boy, to handle the South Durham as you did that day! That clinking whip, Jack, did his duty as only he can. He is a nailer and no mistake. What a pity that hound would have one of the fox's lugs* off and spoil the head! All the first-flight men went extraordinarily well, therefore it is unnecessary to mention any one in particular. We noticed old "Tunstal Maid," and several other hunters, flat racers, and steeplechasers going well, and some of them in at the finish. The chapter of accidents was a long one, but nothing more serious than a good ducking in the stells, or slight shaking occurred, whilst some carried home a good deal of somebody else's land. May Mr. Harvey and the South Durham have many more such runs, is the wish of—"Qui Vive."

This day, January 18th, 1878, was sandwiched in, as it were, between a lot of good things which were typical of Mr. Harvey's last season; and as an account, written by a Durham sportman, of the fun on the 16th, 18th, 21st, and 23rd appeared in the *Field* newspaper of January 26th, with references to the master, hunt servants, and principal subscribers to the Hunt at that time, it shall be reproduced *in extenso*, with the exception of the proceedings on the 18th reported humorously above, and corroborated in every particular as to time and pace by the *Field* account.

Another brilliant week with the South Durham.—These hounds have been showing excellent sport throughout the

* This sounds as if the writer was a Harrier man.

season, and I have often hoped that some abler pen than mine would have sent you an account of some of their doings. The country is only a small one, the Sedgefield portion of the old Durham county; and since the country was divided into North and South Durham six years ago, the South Durham have never had a blank day, which fact shows how popular the venerable master, Mr. John Harvey, is with the farmers and fox preservers.

On Wednesday, 16th, the meet was Fishburn. We drew Galley Law, Humbleknowle, Park House, Cleveland Gorse, Five Houses, and Kelloe Moors blank; found a fox in the rush beds at Kelloe banks; got away on good terms, pointing for Thornley, crossed the Wingate lane, turning to the right over Kelloe Moors, towards the Glebe whin, leaving this on the left nearly to Coxhoe Bridge station; turned to the right towards Coxhoe Hall (as if the fox was going to visit that true supporter of the hunt, Mr. Richard Forster), and was run into in the open after twenty-five minutes without a check, and at a very fast pace. The Master then gave the order for Low Raisby Moor, before reaching which Bevans, the first whip, spied a travelling fox a long distance off, which no doubt had been on foot for some time, as, after fifteen minutes, straight and fast, the hounds ran into him in the middle of a field near Mr. Tait's house.‡

On Monday, the 21st, the meet was Embleton. The first draw was Stotfold whin, then Brierton, neither of which held, probably owing to many of the Hartlepool and Stockton division, instead of coming to the meet, waiting about the covert sides; after drawing without effect until after

‡ There is a note in Claxon's diary of this day's sport, that Rosamond, a six-year-old bitch by Hurworth Reveller out of their Tulip, getting up first, handled the fox by herself until the rest of the pack "joined in the worry."

one o'clock, the hounds hit off the line of a fox in the whin east of Roper's plantations, carried it to the open, and there met a fox (put out of a whin-bush the size of a table, by Bevans) and killed him. Scarcely was he broken up before another fox was viewed in the whins; he went straight to Cole Hill big wood, was rattled about there for a quarter of an hour, and broke at the north-east corner pointing west, turned to his left at the new railway, crossed it above Murton Blue House, and ran half a mile down the west side of the line, re-crossed it, and then to Whin House belt, turned to his left nearly to Embleton, and on to Ammerston Old Hall; then up to Bedlam Gill, across the moors to Quaker's Gill, pointing for Sheraton; was headed, turned to his left and was viewed going into the old Fox Cover by the tilery, where hounds ran into him in forty-five minutes from leaving Cole Hill big wood, the whole time as hard as hounds could race. There were six up at the finish.

Wednesday, the 23rd, met at Dr. Fenwick's, Chilton Hall. Drew Gipsy Whin blank; found a brace in Merrington; twenty minutes to ground at Chilton; found a brace in Mainsforth, had thirty minutes to ground at Quarrington Hill; found at Camp Whin, ran to Hardwick, changed foxes; went away, leaving Bishop Middleham on the left, Camp Whin on the left, past Butterwick to Whin House, and stopped them going into Wynyard, after an hour and forty-five minutes. Again there were but six at the end.

No Master is more popular with his field than Mr. Harvey, and great credit is due to Claxon, the huntsman, for the condition in which he has the pack.

Amongst those who hunt regularly with these hounds, we may mention Lord Henry Vane, Sir William Eden, Bart., Mr. Richard Ord (of Sands), Mr. M. Fowler, junr. (of Pres-

ton Hall), Mr. Richard Forster, Mr. W. H. Wood, Captain Cameron, Mr. George C. Whitwell, Mr. T. Appleby, Dr. Fenwick, &c.—"DUNELMENSIS."

It was about this period, or possibly a little prior to it, that there was a meet at the Hare and Hounds, Garmondsway, and the following account was written by the then Hon. Secretary of the Hunt.—"Found immediately at Camp whin, ran very fast through the Glebe whin into Northside plantation, where the hounds, for some mysterious cause, could carry the line no further. The adjoining colliery being idle that day the pit heap was thronged with young men and pit lads, who are always very keen when they see the "Hoounds," and on this occasion they streamed down the pit heap, and into the plantation amongst the hounds, shouting and yelling in certainly not very parliamentary language. Bevans, who was galloping here, there and everywhere, was fairly puzzled at the sudden change of affairs, as scent from Camp whin to Northside was all that could be wished for. After wasting all his wits in endeavouring to make out how and where the fox had slipped us, he galloped up to me, saying that "there must be very excellent schools at the colliery, as the pit lads there were so well versed in the vulgar tongue."

He also wrote, "one day when running below Embleton hounds pressed their fox very hard, and rattled him through the Whin House belt plantation, from which he broke away to the east, evidently beaten. Bevans, whose eye was as quick as an eagle, seeing that he was about done, made sure of a kill in the open a few fields further on. Still running fast into a whinny pasture, about half a mile from where Bevans viewed him, suddenly hounds threw up their heads, and hit off the line they could not. Thinking the fox had

doubled back Claxon made a rather wide cast, when a loud "holloa" was heard from two men standing on the fence near to where the hounds had checked. Away we all galloped back, Bevans, as usual, foremost to view him out of the whin where the men were pointing to; hounds dashed in, but not a whimper was heard, not a hound spoke, and after a good deal of whip cracking one of the men jumped into the whin, when out rushed an old Scotch ewe with scarcely a bit of wool on her. "Isn't that the beggar you're looking for," said the man. Bevans' round, ruddy, smiling face turned ashy pale, his countenance fell, and as he galloped away, there came forth from out of his inner-man unearthly sounds much resembling a young earthquake; the nature and meaning of these rumblings we did not care to enquire. Bevans evidently thinking he had anathematised sufficiently the fellow who had sold us, got the hounds together and we trotted away, not in the best of humours. From that day the whin has been called "The Beggar's Bush."

"One day in Mr. Harvey's time," writes a reliable correspondent, "there was a quick thing from the old Brierton whin into Wynyard, when hounds should have been stopped, but were not. I was in a ride where a wall of whins at the side opened, a horse's head appeared, and then Jack's cheery face, with an extra beam upon it, because he was interfering with a shooting arrangement!"

In the spring of 1878 Mr. John Harvey, who had now been a master of foxhounds for fifteen years, namely, joint master with Mr. John Henderson, of the Durham County Pack, for nine, and sole master of the South Durham for six seasons, intimated his inability, owing to the ravages of Anno Domini and increasing infirmity, to continue in the

mastership of the hounds, to the great sorrow, it need hardly be said, of everyone connected with fox-hunting in the North of England. A committee was accordingly appointed at a meeting held at Stockton-on-Tees in April, 1878, and presided over by the late Marquis of Londonderry (who though he did not actively participate in the chase, was always most solicitous for its welfare) to approach Sir William Eden, Bart., of Windlestone, with a view to his acceptance of the vacant mastership; the preliminaries were quickly and easily arranged, Sir William being anxious to throw no obstacle in the way of sport, and the office of M.F.H. was accepted by him with a guarantee of £900 per annum from the members of the Hunt on condition that he hunted the country at least two days a week. Though undertaking to provide only the limited amount of hunting, Sir William, like a good sportsman, made up his mind from the first to give the members of the Hunt and followers of his pack as much sport as a country not more than fifteen miles square would permit, and with this end in view moved the hounds from the Hardwick Kennels to commodious premises which he had erected for the purpose at Rushyford; there is no greater drawback to a master of hounds than to reside a long way from his kennels, and Sir William recognised this when he took a step which placed him in near and constant touch with them at a convenient distance from Windlestone. The old hunt servants were retained, Claxon as huntsman, and John Bevans as first whipper-in, save and except that Robert Jay* from the Bedale succeeded to the place of second whipper-in vacated by George Sheppard, who had acted in that capacity for two or three seasons. With this establishment some excellent sport was

* Bevans says that Robert Jay afterwards went into the "flat-hat" country!

witnessed, but the season was a disappointing one for the simple reason that a late harvest was supplemented by a very severe winter, and hounds only left their kennels for hunting purposes on three days in January, 1879, and twice only in February of that year, so that practically seven weeks of sport were lost, and the total number of available hunting days during the season was reduced to sixty-three, from an average of a trifle over eighty! Sir William kept a fine stud of horses for himself, the best, indeed, that money could produce, and prided himself upon the manner in which his hunt servants were mounted; he always maintained that it was much cheaper to purchase good horses for his servants than bad ones, for whilst the good ones jumped everything in a clean manner, and came home without a scratch, the bad ones' legs were torn about, full of thorns, and apt to go wrong at any moment. Some of his own best horses are referred to in Bevans' *narrative*; the best known of these, perhaps, which carried his servants were Blacking, Mrs. Beatty, Patch, Coke, Miss Rowe and the grey horse.

CHAPTER III.

"Such hours, such days, too soon are o'er;
Too few—Ah! would that they were more."

ON Thursday, the 27th of March, 1879, towards the end of Sir William's first season, a notable event occurred at the Town Hall, Stockton-on-Tees, when a testimonial was presented to the late master, Mr. John Harvey, by the members and friends of the South Durham Hunt. The testimonial, to which there were no less than ninety subscribers, consisted of a magnificent oil painting by John Charlton, representing Mr. Harvey on his favourite brown mare, cheering hounds on to the line of a fox, which he had just viewed near Lea Close, with Sedgefield Church in the distance. The mare is the celebrated Polly, and the hounds are Bachelor,* by the Durham County Bluster, out of their Wisdom, leading; with Layman, by Lictor, out of Rally; Alma, by the Brocklesby Ambrose, out of Scandal; Rambler, by Ranger, out of Rally (and half-brother to Layman); Artist, by Brocklesby Ambrose, out of Violet; and

* Bachelor, a Durham County bred one, was a puppy at walk when the dumb-madness broke out. He was a grand specimen of a foxhound, and good as he looked.

"He guides them in covert, he leads them in chase,
Though the young and the jealous try hard for his place;
'Tis Bachelor always is first in the race,
He beats them for nose, and beats them for pace"

Rosy, own sister to Rambler; in the order in which their names are written. It need hardly be said that these were the veteran master's favourite hounds. Claxon and Bevans are represented coming up, the former just touching his horn.

There was naturally a very numerous and influential company at the presentation, and the chair was occupied by the late Marquis of Londonderry, the duties of the vice-chairs being respectively performed by Sir William Eden, Bart., M.F.H., and Mr. A. H. T. Newcomen, the retiring master of the Cleveland. The loyal and patriotic toasts having been duly honoured, the noble chairman rose, amid deafening plaudits, to propose the health of Mr. Harvey, and to make the presentation to him. He observed that he had been acquainted with Mr. Harvey for many years, and he did not believe that Durham County had ever been represented by a better man in the hunting field. (Cheers). It was anything but an easy task to please all parties, but not only had Mr. Harvey thoroughly ingratiated himself with the members of the hunt, but also with those without whose good will hunting would be perfectly useless. (Applause). He, the noble chairman, was not himself a practical follower of foxes, but he had at all times endeavoured to carry out the prestige of his family (hear, hear), and he had at any rate got three representatives who were passionately devoted to the sport. (Cheers). In presenting to Mr. Harvey the picture, which the Hunt conceived would be some means of showing the high esteem they entertained for him, and the warm appreciation they had for his services as Master, he hoped it would be handed down to posterity as a token of the kind regard in which he was universally held. (Cheers). Though Mr. Harvey had now retired from active life in the field, he hoped his presence would frequently be seen, as he

might always depend upon a cordial welcome. (Applause). The painting was then unveiled, and Mr. Harvey's health was drunk in the most enthusiastic manner.

On rising to reply, Mr. Harvey received a very hearty greeting. He observed that the compliment they had paid him was far greater than he deserved, but he accepted the testimonial in the kind spirit intended, knowing that it came from the honest goodwill of fox-hunters and Englishmen. (Hear). Mr. Harvey proceeded at some length to refer to his connection with the chase. He said he first entered the Sedgefield country in March, 1828, when Mr. Lambton was the master. Ten years later, that gentleman had to give up the pack owing to a severe fall, and it appeared that fox-hunting was about to be at a discount; but, fortunately for them, the noble chairman's popular father stepped forward and established the Wynyard and South Durham. Unhappily a big gate proved a more dangerous opponent to him than all the enemies of his country whom he had fought in the Peninsular war, and after Mr. Williamson and Mr. Russell had taken the pack the present arrangements were made. He looked back with pride and pleasure to his long connection with the South Durham, and he hoped the new master would enjoy an equally long and happy career. (Cheers). He concluded by asking the company to drink to the health of the new master, Sir W. Eden. (Applause).

Sir W. Eden responded, observing that any man undertaking the mastership of hounds in England, was taking upon himself no light task. It was especially difficult to follow such a man as Mr. Harvey; but he could only say that he would take him for an example, and do his best to make the hunt a success. (Cheers).

Songs were sung between the toasts, and those who

were present will have a vivid remembrance of Mr. George C. Whitwell striking up with "Hearts of Oak" in such stentorian tones that the Noble Marquis, who was engaged in close conversation with Mr. Harvey at the time, put up his right hand, and amid roars of laughter called out "For Heaven's sake stop that band!" On the retirement of the chairman and some of the principal actors in the evening's proceedings Squire Sutton, of Elton, was voted to the chair, and though not sufficiently fortunate to be present myself and hear his remarks, I understand that his opening speech fairly brought down the house, and that a more convivial evening was never spent than by the few (mostly residents in and about Stockton) who remained until the lights went out. Certain it is that the words of the Squire's well known hunting song, "Ballynamona Ora, the hounds of Ralph Lambton for me," resounded many a time and oft in the fine old Hall.

This occasion witnessed the very last public appearance of Mr. John Harvey in connection with the sport which may be said to have been for over fifty years almost life and health to him; he did it is true put in an appearance at the covert side once after this, but he practically retired now from all active participation in the chase, though his very heart and soul were still full of enthusiasm for it,* and it delighted him to talk and write of all the varied changes that hunting had undergone in the country from the days of the celebrated Ralph Lambton, for whom he always exhibited the greatest

* "Who'er in youth has grasped at such delight,
Shall feel congenial stirrings late and long:
Tho' taught to own the tranquil power of time
Shall wake sometimes to noble restlessness,
Loving the sports which once he gloried in.

love and admiration, until his own retirement; he was ever solicitous for the future welfare of foxhunting in his beloved "Sedgefield Country"; and his numerous letters, for his pen when once started was prolific, have tended to throw much light upon what happened in the hunting field in days when the Nimrods, and Nim Norths, and Daniel Oldbucks were few and far between. As this seems to be a fitting period for a life history of the game old Foxhunter, who lived in quiet retirement amongst his friends whose name was always legion, until August 6th 1893 (just fifteen after his retirement as M.F.H., an office curiously enough he also held exactly fifteen years), it shall be given at a length, proportionate to its importance.

Mr. John Harvey, who was born in Strawberry House, Newcastle-on-Tyne (a last century building still standing amongst the remnants of what were its grounds near the top of Albion Street) on the 29th February, 1804, was in many ways a remarkable man, and so excellent was the account of the worthy old gentleman's life which appeared in the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* of August 8th, 1893, two days after his death, that I have no hesitation in reproducing a portion of it, and at the same time tender my thanks to the author of it:—

"Often does it happen that the men who succeed in securing an exceptional lease of life here below have never been really robust, or as the Vets. would say 'absolutely sound in wind and limb.' Force of character and keen intelligence have much to do with the attainment of length of days; this was particularly the case with the grand old sportsman just deceased, and it was so, although for a period of almost unprecedented duration he regularly every year engaged in a pursuit making the strongest demands

upon the physique. In his case the true key-note of existence was early struck, the result being a harmony impressive to all men quitting the traditions, the habits and the modes of life characteristic of townsmen generally. Mr. Harvey lived an open-air life summer and winter, and as became a mighty hunter, at length found himself almost the only remaining link in our social chain between the first decade of the century and the last. No greater votary of the chase has the North country ever known, and his name will remain for many a year to come historic in connection with fox hunting, just as that of Ralph Lambton, his predecessor at Sedgefield has already become. Yet unlike other great exponents of the sport elsewhere, Mr. Harvey was a dweller in the city throughout the centre period of his life, and as a man of business his closest attention was required by many matters differing widely as the poles from the duties of a Master of Foxhounds. The exceptional force of character which distinguished him was demonstrated in many ways. Besides being great as an M.F.H. he was a successful manufacturer, a keen critic of literature and the drama, and a practical naturalist. Further he possessed that undefinable faculty of attracting towards him the good men and true of all ranks and classes, and although he has long outlived the friends of his youth, and even of his more mature years it is literally the truth that his decease will cause a widespread feeling of regret."

Mr. Harvey's progenitors had been engaged in the tobacco trade for at least a couple of generations, his grandfather having purchased their well-known establishment from Mildred Collingwood, the mother of the famous sailor, Lord Collingwood, whose birthplace it was, some years prior to the time of his decease. Mr. Harvey was the recognised "Nes-

"Gone Away" from Lee Close.

HARVEY PRESENTATION PICTURE, March 27th, 1879.

tor" of the tobacco trade, and amongst the people technically concerned in the same, he was held in estimation and respect, almost equal to the feeling with which he was regarded by the farmers of South Durham and the hunting men of the North of England generally. Generous and kind hearted to a degree, he kept up a weekly free dole of tobacco to the inmates of the workhouse almost to the last; just as his father in the beginning of the century used to place on his counter every Saturday night a small tray containing a pound of tobacco put up in half-ounce packets, a weekly gift to the poor of his immediate neighbourhood; never was Mr. John Harvey happier than when making a small present of money or tobacco to some poor and deserving recipient, and whether in the Sedgefield country or in the streets of "canny" Newcastle anyone who did him a turn, however trifling, was more than remembered; many a time has he gladdened the heart of a gatekeeper at a level crossing when hounds passed over the line, or, of an intelligent engine driver who pulled up his charge in time to prevent destruction or damage to any of the hounds, or, of a needy yokel who has run to open a gate when hounds were not in cry, or, of a labourer who has tendered assistance when the hunt servants have been busy in endeavouring to eject a fox from a drain. Never was an opportunity missed of popularizing fox-hunting amongst those whose support was most required, and never did man succeed in rendering himself more popular, I might almost say worshipped, in a hunting country, where hounds met with nothing but welcome; and such a thing as opposition, even in the faintest form, was entirely unknown.

In a letter, dated December 7th, 1880, Mr. Harvey says, "My books, of forty years ago or upwards, have been

unfortunately lost or destroyed." This is a matter of regret, as we might have obtained from them a more accurate account of his early hunting days, and gained a more complete knowledge of the earlier events of the century than is at present in our possession; suffice it to say that his experiences of hunting commenced at the early age of ten years, when he was the proud possessor of a clever little active pony, on which he followed the Newcastle Corporation Harriers, which usually met in the neighbourhood of Fenham, and frequently hunted a portion of country now completely covered by streets. It was some few years after this that he was initiated into the mysteries of fox-hunting, but the old gentleman used to be fond of relating how, on New Year's Day, 1820, he went to a meet of the Lambton hounds at Benshaw, just for a holiday jaunt. As it happened, there proved to be nothing of the holiday sort about the sport at all, and the Newcastle youth was entered to fox-hunting in a singularly appropriate manner. Reynard was found at home in the vicinity of Low Fell, and hounds ran with a burning scent to the high ground by Wreckenton, and thence to Washington and the valley of the Wear. The river was crossed where it is now spanned by the Victoria Bridge; and then the fox headed for the rough country by Penshaw Hill; still he was kept moving, and the fast diminishing field followed on to the eastward until late in the afternoon, when the kill was effected a short distance from Seaham Harbour. At this time only four horsemen were upon decent terms with the pack, viz., Mr. Ralph Lambton, the lad Harvey, Jack Winter, the first whipper-in; and Bob Hunnum, the second whipper-in (and for some years previously known by the name of "Mr. Ralph's great-coat," being the appellation given to him by a French nobleman, who

visited the North of England a good deal whilst "Bob" was acting as second horseman, and in the habit of carrying for Mr. Lambton that very useful piece of body furniture!)

Young Harvey had never been in that part of the country before, and was entirely ignorant of the way home, but the genial Master rode up to him, seeing his dilemma, and said, "What is your name, boy; have you been with us all day?" "Oh, yes;" replied young Harvey, "I have come the whole way with you from Benshaw." "Then you 're a thoroughbred 'un," was the rejoinder; "but you still have a long ride before you, come along and I will set you fairly on the road." The experienced hunter and the novice rode side by side for some distance conversing on the incidents of the eventful day, and their meeting was the commencement of a close friendship, which was terminated only by Mr. Lambton's death. Though frequently attending the meets of the hounds in the northern part of the country, Mr. Harvey was never introduced to the Sedgefield country, which he afterwards loved so well, until the year 1828 or 1829. I had always been under the impression that it was in 1828, but the following extract from a letter of Mr. Harvey's, dated April 11th, 1884, fixes it as 1829. "My only thought was to go on as long as I could in a country I loved* from 1829, when I first hunted in it with dear old Ralph Lambton. Met at Blakiston, holloaed to a fox as we were going to Sutton's whin, and killed close to Ayton in Yorkshire. A careful calculation of distances shows that Mr. Harvey rode

* "There is not in the wide world a country so sweet
As the meads in whose heart the South Durham meet;
Oh! the last rays of feeling and life must depart,
Ere the runs of those foxhounds shall fade from my heart!"

Mr. Harvey always wrote of the Sedgefield country—"It seemed to be the centre of a setting of gems."

on this eventful day close on to ninety miles, as he has frequently told me that he hacked from Newcastle to Sedgefield twenty-six miles, and thence five miles to the meet, and after the long and severe day's hunting hacked back to Newcastle at night; where he arrived between 9 and 10 p.m.—truly a day's hunting that few, in these days of railways and motor cars, would undertake, however great their reward. But it was a regular custom with Mr. Harvey about this period, and for some years later, to do all his hunting in the Sedgefield country from Newcastle, not unfrequently in the company of his friends, Mr. Matthew Clayton and Mr. John Shield, the three becoming members of the Sedgefield Club in the same year, viz., 1834, their annual subscription being the modest sum of £4 4s., which was all that members were called upon to pay. These hardy sportsmen were in the habit of hiring their hacks from a jobmaster named William Sinclair, whose stables were situated in Northumberland Street, just behind the large premises abutting on Elwick Court, and who kept on hand a few stout and reliable animals; their regular programme on hunting days in the Sedgefield country, *i.e.*, three days a week, was one that would bring dismay to the keenest sportsman of the present time; the preliminary ride of twenty-five or twenty-six miles to Sedgefield, where their hunters were located, occupied as a rule about two and a half hours, a start being generally made about 7-30 a.m. At Sedgefield they mounted their hunters, which were in readiness, and rode on to the meet, sometimes a distance of seven, eight, or nine miles further; then they enjoyed the sport of the day with the great master and his pack, for which they made such sacrifices; rode their hunters back to Sedgefield, had an early dinner immediately on return

Mr. JOHN HARVEY.

from hunting, at the Hardwick Club (after they had been elected in 1834), and then mounting their hacks once more cantered home in the darkness to Newcastle; which was usually reached about 10 p.m. Truly a remarkable day's work, to say nothing of the repetition, *thrice-a-week*, but there is no exaggeration about it, and it was only when he felt a sense of weariness at the close of the day, caused by advancing years, that the veteran Foxhunter allowed himself the comfort of sleeping at the Hardwick Arms, the night before hunting. Up to the very last it was his custom always to sleep in his own bed on hunting nights, and he would, after hurriedly consuming a chop at the "Hardwick," drive to Sedgefield station and catch a train at about a quarter to seven to Newcastle.

A more popular master of Foxhounds than Mr. John Harvey it would be difficult to imagine; to those hunting with his pack his courtesy was unvarying; indeed there was a kind of freemasonry between him and all the members of the Hunt, which rendered anything approaching friction absolutely out of the question. To the Hunt servants he was a liberal and generous master, though in his dealings with them he always exhibited the same firmness which he showed in his management of the field; whilst on the best of terms with everybody he never allowed anyone to take a liberty with him, and no doubt it was his great force of character which disarmed everyone and prevented any upstart from harbouring such an idea for a moment. Even yet the farmers of South Durham venerate the name of Harvey, and relate stories of his prowess in the saddle, and tell of the difficulty in catching the "little old man" if ever he got a flying start. His cattle were light weight blood hunters, as nearly throughbred as possible, for he only rode

a trifle over nine stones, and, at any rate in his younger days, liked to be carried bang up in the front rank. No one during a run was imbued more deeply with the enthusiasm of the chase, and though he liked to find himself in the first place, there was not an iota of jealousy in his nature, and he would at any time go out of his way to give a younger and more inexperienced horseman the benefit of his advice, so valuable from his thorough knowledge of the country.

Mr. Harvey was not a great hound man, for the simple reason that living as he did so far away from the kennels, and being so deeply engrossed in business on all non-hunting days, he had few opportunities of paying that close attention to his pack which an M.F.H. is usually able to do; still he did not look upon hounds as so many do, as mere machines to drive a fox in front of them, and loved to listen as they returned home after a good day, to Claxon's remarks on the performances of some of his favourites. Of horses he was extremely fond, and would dilate for long enough on the merits of many whose portraits were hung round his sitting-room at Leazes Terrace. Most of his favourite hunters were there depicted, and the prowess of "Dancing Master" and "the old grey-tailed mare" were his pet themes. "Dancing Master" was a son of the famous "McOrville," who did so much to improve the breed of hunters in Northumberland and Durham, and was purchased from Sir M. W. Ridley. Like his master he was a horse of iron constitution. The "grey-tailed mare" was also one of the progeny of "McOrville." She came into Mr. Harvey's possession when three years old, and carried him consistently well until she was over twenty. A more abstemious man in matters both of eating and drinking than Mr. Harvey

there could not well have been; a light breakfast was all that he partook of until the day's sport was over, for he never (at any rate until he was sixty years of age) ate or drank anything in the field, and his dinner at the "Hardwick" was modest in the extreme, consisting, as it usually did, of a chop and a glass of claret! Such another was his great master, Mr. Ralph Lambton, who made it a practice never to touch anything whilst out hunting, and at Sedgefield he would never sit down to dine until he had seen that the hounds were fed, and the horses made comfortable. Mr. Harvey was fond of telling a tale of his great chief, who, until after the last but one of his terrible falls, would not condescend to carry into the field with him anything in the shape of a "thumb piece." One day towards the close of his career, he turned towards his young friend, and pulling a couple of cakes from his pocket, said, "Come, Harvey, have a bun. My doctors tell me that I must carry buns with me when out hunting, but they can't make me eat them." Advancing years caused Mr. Harvey himself to break in at last to the "sandwich and pocket flask business," as he termed it, but he always regarded the usage with disparagement, and his only remark as to its utility was connected with an occasion when he was enabled to entirely revive a dead-beaten steed by pouring the contents of a flask of whisky down its throat! In private life Mr. Harvey was a true friend, a genial companion, with a never failing sense of humour; in a word he was a fine specimen of a manly and cultivated Englishman, his knowledge of books, the drama, and natural history being both great, deep and widespread. No man was ever blessed with a more retentive memory, and no one had a greater circle of friends in all stations of life. He died on the 6th of August, 1893, in

the 90th year of his age, and may be said to have retained his faculties to the last, the letters received from him in 1892 being marvels of mental clearness and acute memory. Having come into the world on February 29th, Mr. Harvey only had a birthday every four years, and was fond of joking about this. He always wondered whether he would come of age, and when he celebrated his twenty-first birthday on February 29th, 1886, received numerous congratulatory telegrams which afforded him immense gratification.

"Peace to his ashes," for of him it may be truly said "a more unselfish man never was born," and

> "He called not each horse, that o'er took him a screw,
> But loved a run best when his friends saw it too."

SIR WILLIAM EDEN, BART.

CHAPTER IV.

"But all that I care for, and all that I know,
Is that with a scent we're certain to go."

MR. W. H. WOOD, of West Hetton Lodge, and now of Coxhoe Hall, performed the Honorary Secretarial duties during the whole of the time that Mr. John Harvey was master of the South Durham Hounds with the greatest care and efficiency, indeed Mr. Harvey says in a letter bearing date, April 13th, 1881, and speaking of Mr. Wood, "his accounts are a marvel for particulars!" Mr. Wood continued the office of Honorary Secretary for the first season of Sir William Eden's first mastership, when he resigned, to the regret of the members of the Hunt, and at the desire of Sir William, who purchased the entire pack of hounds in 1879 for the sum of £700, Mr. R. Ord, of Sands Hall, undertook the Secretarial duties,* which he fulfilled until his own mastership. The name of South Durham was now withdrawn, and the hounds became known as Sir William Eden's Hounds, the master having undertaken to hunt the country five days a fortnight. As a matter of fact they hunted three days a week as soon as the regular season

* Mr. R. Ord's great uncle, Mr. Benjamin Ord, was honorary secretary of the Lambton Hunt during the whole of Mr. R. J. Lambton's mastership, from 1804 to 1838.

commenced, and with the exception of a covert and poultry fund Sir William defrayed all expenses connected with the hunting of the country out of his own pocket. During the season of 1879-80 the covert and poultry fund amounted to £615 0s. 6d., and in the following season it fell to £547 3s. 6d., one or two subscribers who lived outside the country having given notice of withdrawal the previous year.

The season of 1879-80, the first of Sir William Eden's hounds, was an excellent one in many ways, as will be gathered from Bevans' account of several of the best days' sport later on. Three consecutive good days might be added, namely, March 19th, when the meet was Redmarshall, and a twenty-eight minutes ring from Oxeye to ground, in a rabbit hole, in Sandylees was "of the best"; this was followed by ninety minutes from Viewly Hall, over the Elton and Foxhill country; on the 22nd March, the East country provided fine sport from "good old Jordison's" Moors; the fox pointed for Greatham, but was headed at Claxton Grange, and worked his way along the burn side to Close Wood, Newton Hansard, Whin House belt, Ten O'clock Barn, Lumpley and Humbleknowle plantation, where he was killed handsomely in the open after a really good ninety-five minutes. On March 24th we were in the West country, and again a good thing came off. After killing an old fox (that had been ousted from Middridge whin) at Windlestone, and drawing a lot of afternoon country blank, hounds found at Sprucely at 3-30, and ran gaily through Hardwick past Sands Hall and Bog Hall to Shotton whin, where reynard doubled back for Bog Hall whin, and then on to Neseless and Homer Carr, pursuit being abandoned at Watt's plantation as it was found that he had crossed the road into Layton Lings, and it was getting late. Time of run, just over an hour.

Sir William's last season was by no means a vintage one, indeed the season of 1880-81 was one of the worst on record in very many countries; and from the commencement of cub-hunting on Sept. 16th, 1880, until the last day of regular hunting on April 14th, 1881, there was hardly a day worth remembering.

Every day's sport recorded in my diary ends up with the words "no scent," or, "moderate scent"; and foxes were not so plentiful as they might have been in some parts of the country, especially about Camp whin and the Fishburn district—though the "bag" was a very useful one in spite of every drawback. Perhaps the most interesting day of the whole season was March 9th, 1881, when advantage was taken of a meet at Chilton Hall, the residence of C. J. C. Fenwick, Esq., to present to Sir William Eden, Bart., who had given notice to retire from the mastership of the hounds at the end of the season (owing to a contemplated tour in India), a large and handsome silver salver, which had been subscribed for by the members of the Hunt in recognition of Sir William's excellent services, both as master of the South Durham Hunt and of his own hounds, during the past three seasons. It need hardly be said that there was a large and influential gathering of members and of ladies present, including Mrs. Surtees of Redworth, Mrs. Fenwick of Chilton Hall, Messrs. Appleby, Denton, Fenwick, McCullagh, Bruce, Page-Page, Robson, etc. Mr. Ord, who was deputed to make the presentation for the Hunt, did so in a few carefully chosen words. Sir William briefly responded, thanking all for their kind thought, assuring them that his mastership had been a pleasant one, owing to the capital support he had met with on all sides, and expressing a hope that the future of the Hunt would be as prosperous as it

had been in the past; he also intimated his intention of subscribing handsomely to the pack during his absence abroad; his remarks eliciting cheers and expressions of strong approval on every side. A very fair day's sport ensued, remarkable in a way for a chapter of accidents, Dr. Fenwick having to be pulled out from under his horse in a ditch; Claxon, the huntsman, jumped into a pond and received a rare ducking, whilst the Hon. Sec. was knocked off his horse by the bough of a tree, but all three escaped without further injury.

In consequence of Sir William's enforced retirement at the end of the season, a meeting of subscribers to the Hunt had been held at Stockton-on-Tees to consider further arrangements as to hunting the country. The late Marquis of Londonderry presided, and after various discussions as to the retiring Master's generosity in offering to lend the hounds and let the kennels, the following resolutions were unanimously carried. 1.—That the country be hunted at least two days a week by a subscription pack, at an estimated cost of £1600 per annum (£1280 of which the Hon. Secretary announced had been already promised). 2.—That Sir William Eden's hounds be purchased by the South Durham Hunt at a cost of £700, the exact amount paid for them by Sir William. For this purpose a subscription list was started, and upwards of £300 guaranteed, the noble chairman amid great applause intimating his intention of subscribing £100 towards each fund.* It was

* The late Marquis of Londonderry, though he did not ride himself, was generous in assisting the affairs of the Hunt. In a letter bearing date, November 24th, 1884, Mr. Harvey writes, "And the Marquis—never was there a better friend to hunting than he was; he never but once declined me any request I made to him, and that was when I asked him not to give a donation of £100, which ought to have been paid by partakers of the sport, but he would not listen to me!"

held that Sir William's offer to accept for the hounds £400 down, and permit the remainder to be paid by instalments, or deducted from his annual subscription (the extremely liberal one of £250) was worthy of all praise.

On the motion of the Chairman, seconded by Lord Henry Vane Tempest, Mr. Ord was unanimously appointed Master in the field; and Messrs. J. S. Sutton (Elton Hall) and T. Appleby (Ashfield House, Greatham), managers of the finance and commissariat departments respectively, the latter gentleman also undertaking the duties of Hon. Sec. The newly elected master and managers cordially returned thanks, and the meeting concluded with a similar vote to the noble chairman for the sound advice and great pecuniary assistance he had given to the Hunt.*

The question of erecting new kennels in a more central position than at Rushyford, which had cropped up, was shelved, at any rate for the present, as it was considered that there was already sufficient drain upon the pockets of Hunt subscribers; accordingly the kennels and stabling, which had been recently erected at Rushyford, were leased from Sir William Eden, together with houses for the huntsman, whippers-in and servants, and here, on the 17th May, a most successful puppy show, as far as numbers and quality are concerned, was held and well attended. The only change in hunt servants this year was the substitution of William Mason from the York and Ainsty, for George Masters, who

* A funny little incident occurred during the meeting, which was not reported at the time. The subject under consideration was the practicability of maintaining a subscription pack, When a gentleman rose, and with all solemnity proposed that a Bazaar be held as a means of raising funds for the purpose; a smile passed round the room, but the noble chairman's face was one of unutterable disgust! Did he hear, he enquired, some gentleman proposing a Bazaar? Preposterous! A Bazaar might do for a church or organ, but a Bazaar to help the gentlemen of South Durham to keep a pack of hounds! Ridiculous! The ingenious proposer at once subsided.

after one season's work as second whipper-in went back to Sir Bache Cunard.

The season of 1881-2 will long be remembered as an extraordinarily fine one for sport in most hunting countries, and in South Durham the openness of the weather (hounds were never stopped by frost or fog), the succession of fine scenting days, and the abundance of real good and stout foxes combined to render it an altogether exceptionable one in the Foxhunter's diary. There is no doubt but that a good scent often, if not as a rule, makes a good fox, and to the plethora of scent, if it may so be termed, on almost every occasion that hounds left their kennels, may be attributed the seeming extra stoutness of the foxes, who always appeared to be aware of what was in store for them, and went both "straight and long."

The opening day at Sands Hall, when a brace of foxes was accounted for, was rendered noteworthy not so much by the excellence of the sport as by the revival of a time honoured old custom, namely that of the dining together at the Hardwick Arms, Sedgefield, of the subscribers to the Hunt. It is more than probable that "Ruinart" was the brand of champagne indulged in that night, as under that *nom de plume*, one who was present describes the evening's proceedings in the *Field* newspaper on the following Saturday, and evidently enjoyed himself immensely.

"In the evening, the subscribers to the Hunt to the number of thirty dined together at Sedgefield, and spent a thoroughly sporting and pleasant evening, the health of the Master and Hon. Secretary being drunk amid holloas that must have pretty well frightened all the foxes out of the country, whilst there was no scarcity of hunting and other sporting songs in which the Master, Hon. Secretary,

Mr. G. C. Whitwell, and others indulged. It is such pleasant entertainments as these that keep many a hunt together; and may I often be present at such another."

Similar dinners and pleasant evenings were repeated during the season at the houses of Mr. R. C. Denton, a staunch supporter, and of Mr. A. De L. Long, a firm friend of the Hunt, and both these gentlemen, it goes for saying, proved themselves the very soul of hospitality.

Amongst those who attended the festive meets were the Master, Hon. Secretary, Messrs. R. C. and J. P. Denton, Page-Page, George Whitwell, Faber, Ropner, Sadler, Dodds.

As a rule a season's hunting does not perhaps include more than half a dozen really first-class days, but in this year of our grace 1881-2 there were no less than fourteen or fifteen days with the South Durham foxhounds, which carry with them the pleasantest recollections, and reference to a diary seems to bring back in the most vivid manner every incident that occurred, now, alas! over twenty years ago! One or two days only will be referred to, as nothing is so tiresome as the infliction upon readers of good sport of which they did not partake, though it may equally well be said that nothing is so interesting to those who were participators in them as the recollection of bygone days, which were a source of pleasure to them at the time.

November 2nd was a grand day, when the hounds met at Trimdon, and killed a leash of foxes after three runs of fifteen minutes, fifty minutes and twenty minutes all of the best; but, perhaps, December 2nd was more noteworthy from the fact that it was one of the first days that Mr. W. Briggs,* who has for the last twenty years played such a

* Mr. W. Briggs's first day was March 31st, 1879, when the meet also was at Trimdon, and a fox, found at Park House Whin, was killed in the open near the same covert, after a very fine gallop.

prominent part in sport with these hounds, hunted with the South Durham. It seems as though but yesterday when, on the conclusion of the day's sport, he enquired the way to his destination, and asked somewhat concernedly, "Do you often have days like this? As, if so, my stud will have to be very much enlarged!" With him, if memory may be relied on, were Messrs. Kidson, Horn and Booth, the latter of whom seems to have retired altogether, though he once had a good, if wilful, dark-brown horse.* The meet that memorable day was at Fishburn, and the first fox driven out of Carrside, raced away through Humbleknowle and Galley Law (where he was headed), back to Humbleknowle, and on to Park House whin and White Hurworth, where he went to ground, after a burst of about fifteen minutes. Found a fresh fox at Glebe whin and ran a steeplechase to Camp whin, where we had three foxes in front and probably changed. Got away again by Holdforth Bar, and leaving the County Asylum on the right made straight for Galley Law and Humbleknowle; thence over the Skerne to Blue House covert, where we may have changed again; crossed the railway near Hurworth Burn, pointing for Cole Hill; bore to the right to Stotfold Moors and Red Gap, and stopped the hounds at Salter House, Wynyard, after running really hard for an hour and forty three minutes.

The "Traveller's Rest" day of November 11th, which afforded such a severe gallop, is referred to at length by Bevans, in his reminiscences, and he also alludes to the Coxhoe day on the 14th, so there is no necessity for recapitu-

* I fancy this horse was called "Blarney." One day, when near Rushyford, Mr. Briggs asked Bevans if he had seen his friend on the horse, as they intended going home together. "Yes," said Bevans, "I saw him taking charge a good bit since, and going as hard as he could in the opposite direction to hounds; he was going in the direction of Darlington, but looked as if he was 'labelled' for York!"

lation. Other good days were November 25th, at Aycliffe, when one run of an hour and fifty-three minutes caused all to cry *enough!* and December 21st, at Fishburn, when a good fox from Humbleknowle stood up before hounds for an hour and fifty minutes before he was killed at Hart Bushes. Hounds were never once handled; and Bevans and others, who viewed the fox away in the first instance, always maintained that it was the self-same fox throughout. The two following days were almost equally good, as were many others that succeeded, and it will perhaps suffice if mention is made of the Longnewton day on March 3rd, 1882, when hounds showed what they could do, given straight foxes and a holding scent.

Details from Diary are as follows.—Found a brace at once at Fox Hill, and racing away, at first east and then bearing round north-west, hounds killed their fox in twelve minutes. Drew Barker's plantation, Sandylees, Sutton's whin, Oxeye, Bishopton whin, Woogrey, and Lee Close blank. Found on Bleach House moors and had a magnificent forty-five minutes, as fast as we could go, by Lee Close covert, Bishopton on the left, Woogrey and Barmpton whin to Albert Hill Ironworks, running into him at the wall surrounding the Presbyterian Chapel in North Road, Darlington, which he vainly endeavoured to scale.†

Altogether the season of 1881-2 was about a best on record, and seems to stand out by itself at this period. In 1882-3 there was a very successful cub-hunting, and young foxes were very numerous, no less than two and a half brace being accounted for one morning (Sept. 22nd, 1882)

† Two four-year-old hunters went well to the front throughout this gallop, but they never really recovered from the effects of the pace and severity of the run, and neither of them did much hunting afterwards.

at Bradbury wood; the diary says it was a "short but bloody morning!"

Mr. Ord, who was now master of the South Durham Hunt, had been married in the autumn of the year, and it was determined by the members of the Hunt to make the opening meet at Sands Hall, on November 3rd, the occasion of a small wedding presentation to him. One of the local newspapers is responsible for the following account, which is reproduced, as it gives the names of many who were present. Many of them are, unfortunately, "amongst the missing"; still it is some consolation to find that a goodly number are as keen for the sport as they were on that day over twenty-one years ago.

The Account runs.—"The opening day of the season of the South Durham Hunt, which took place yesterday, Nov. 3rd., 1882, was marked by an event pleasing to every member of the Hunt. The meeting was at Sands Hall, Sedgefield, the residence of the master, Mr. Richard Ord, but the throw off was considerably delayed, owing to some extent to the large number of ladies and gentlemen who were present to take part in the opening day's sport. Amongst those present on and near the lawn were Lord Henry Vane Tempest, Sir William Eden, Bart., Colonel Sadler, Mr. Thomas Appleby, Dr. Fenwick, Chilton Hall; Mr. Fisher, West Hartlepool; Mr. J. Flavel, Mr. C. H. Backhouse, Mr. Marshall Fowler, Mr. Baxter, Hartlepool; Mr. C. Hayes Jackson, Major Ropner, Preston; Mr. M. B. Dodds, Mr. J. W. Page-Page, Rev. C. H. Ford, Bishopton; Mr. R. C. Denton, Mr. John Stevenson, Norton; Mr. J. Hornsby, Honington Hall; Mr. J. Beach, West Hartlepool; Mr. Hardy, Trimdon East House; Mr. Milburn, Sedgefield; Mr. Maddison, Fishburn; Mr. Giles, Sedgefield; Mr. Christopher

Jordison, Stockton; Mr. G. W. Sutton, Elton Hall; Captain H. Fawcus, Boldon, Newcastle; Mr. R. F. Trenholm, Butterwick; Mr. James Menzies; Mr. W. Clark, Bradbury; Mr. J. Carr, Durham; and a great many others. Just before the signal to mount was given, a beautiful case, containing a silver afternoon tea service, a crown Derby china set, and a silver hunting horn were placed on a table on the lawn. Lord Henry Vane Tempest stepped forward, and in the name of the South Durham Hunt, presented them to the master, in commemoration of his marriage. Mr. Ord thanked Lord Henry for making the presentation, and the whole of the members of the Hunt for the kindly feeling expressed towards himself and Mrs. Ord in the presentation of such a handsome gift. So long as he was master of the South Durham Hunt he would do his best to promote good sport. Having alluded to the friendly relations that existed between the Hunt and the farmers of the district, he hoped that as this morning was so fine it would be an augury of a successful and pleasant season for all. The teapot and hunting horn bore the following inscription:—"*Mitis et fortis.* Presented to Richard Ord, Esq., M.F.H., on the occasion of his marriage, August 3rd, 1882, by the Members of the South Durham Hunt." Three cheers having been given for Mr. and Mrs. Ord, the huntsman threw off the hounds in Firtree Hill plantation, and quickly a leash of foxes were found at home. They went away very fast to Morden Moor and back to Fir Tree Hill, where the holloaing was terrific! Then again at a rapid pace to Morden and past Breckon Hill to Bog Hall, and on over Stillington moors to Howe Hills and Morden Carrs, where he was run into in one of the stells; there being some delay in getting at the drowned 'varmint,' Lord Henry Vane Tempest jumped off his horse,

rushed into the muddy stell up to his waist, and brought out the dead fox in his arms amid acclamation. Other good sport followed, including a fast gallop to Bishop Middleham. There is always a good day or two from the Bishopton meet every year, and the season 1882-3 proved no exception in this respect, for on January 3rd, 1883, there were two first-class gallops from Fox Hill and Sutton's whin respectively; the first of fifty-five minutes ending with a kill near to where he was found, and the second of twenty-eight minutes terminating with a similar result.

Undoubtedly the longest run of the season, or for the matter of that perhaps for the last thirty years, took place after the Thorpe meet on January 12th, 1883, when a fox was found at a quarter to twelve in a rough grass field outside Lee Close, and run to ground below Great Stainton at exactly twenty minutes to four. This was the day when a serious accident happened to John Bevans, through his horse swerving from an engine at the Railway crossing on Stillington moors. The points of the run were Lee Close, Bleachhouse moors, Stillington moors, Foxton plantation, Sedgefield, Butterwick (where he turned back), Glower-o'er-him, Cote Nook, Layton, Neseless, Morden south side, Howe hills, Elstob, Byers Gill, Mount Pleasant, and Tilery plantation, Barmpton whin; then by Newtown Ketton, Lee Hall, Elstob whin (second time), Bleach House plantation, Lee Close again, Great Stainton, Elstob whin (visited for the third time), thence through Byers Gill (second time), and to ground under the road about half a mile below great Stainton, when it was getting very dark. The run occupied just under four hours, though Claxon's diary says a little over four hours. In addition to the accident to John Bevans, Mr. J. Beach lost a valuable horse during the run; speak-

ing from memory, it broke its back; and several horses lay down, momentarily exhausted, as the going was by no means perfect. The furthest distance from point to point in the run was eight miles, but, as will be seen on reference to the map, there were several very useful minor points. No doubt there were many changes during the course of this lengthy run, as there were at one time three lines, but it is curious that the chase terminated within about half a mile of where it commenced. There was a fine scent all day, and hounds kept running on the whole time, every horse being spun out at the finish.

"Onward we struggle in sorrow and labour,
Lurching and lobbing, and bellows to mend,
Each, while he smiled at the plight of his neighbour,
Only was anxious to get to the end."

CHAPTER V.

"Sweet to relax life's sterner rule,
The motley don, and play the fool!"

ABOUT a fortnight later, January 26th, 1883, the first South Durham Hunt Ball was held in the Corn Exchange, Stockton-on-Tees, and was very largely attended; its success was, in a great measure, due to the energy displayed by Mr. George C. Whitwell, who looked after the secretarial duties and made excellent arrangements for the comfort and amusement of the two hundred and fifty guests.

The same afternoon there appeared some verses, entitled *The Lay of the South Durham Hunt*, by "Scarlet and Green," which might not be entirely devoid of interest if inserted here, as reference is made to all those who may be said to have hunted regularly with the hounds at this time; the names are now for the first time appended.

THE LAY OF THE SOUTH DURHAM HUNT, 1882.

I.

Hurrah for our country, our horses, our hounds;
Hurrah for the holloa, and the horn's cheery sounds;
Hurrah for the fox, who to give him his due,
Keeps his neck ever straight, be it in covert or view.

II.

Hurrah for the "flies" and the "drops" which we meet,
That make the best horseman sit back in his seat;
Hurrah for our banks, our brooks and our ditches,
When hard by the tail of the South Durham bitches.

III.

Cheers for the man who ever rides straight,
Who flies every fence and jumps every gate;
Cheers, too, for the man who comes down a cropper,
And cares not a rap though he 's smashed in his "topper."

IV.

Our task is no light one—your patience we crave,
So list just a moment, while we *tip* you a stave;
And if aught should appear to hurt or offend,
Just give us the *cue*, and our words we will mend.

V.

Great Stainton 's the meet on a fine Autumn day,
The air 's very clear, the wind the right way;
A gay troop of horsemen from East and from West,
From North and from South, the bravest and best.

VI.

The Master,[1] to whom precedence is due,
With huntsmen and hounds soon comes into view;
The lady[2] beside them they look at with pride,
Though to hunting *long-wedded*, is only a *bride*.

VII.

Both Master and Mistress are well known to all,
In farm house and cottage, in village and hall;
From Thornley to Elton, most farmers you meet
Will tell you they "ken them vary well for to greet."

VIII.

There 's Claxon the huntsman on his favourite "Nun,"
With his beauties beside him all keen for the fun;
At the sound of his horn bold reynard oft flies,
Ere a note 's heard again, bold reynard oft dies.

[1]Mr. and [2]Mrs. Ord.

IX.

Then Jack,[1] the first whip, on "The Widow," please note,
For a clinking good whip we 'd give him our vote ;
Whether pug steals away on this side or that,
That Jack views him "forrard" we 'll bet a new hat.

X.

There 's Mason[2] behind on a nice chestnut mare,
He rides a light weight and when wanted is there ;
With hounds so well tutored they seldom run riot,
And we think his chief aim is to keep his mare quiet.

XI.

From "Windlestone" come two good looking steeds,
Selected with care from the best Irish breeds ;
Should at "Tatt's" you e're see such, then mark you, my boys,
You 'd not let them go without making a noise.

XII.

Ere long their neat master[3] drives up with a pair,
While some one remarks 'tis a good scenting air ;
If hounds only run and the forecast is right,
You 'll find it no light task to keep him in sight.

XIII.

Who 's that on the grey? Don't you see it 's Lord Harry,[4]
With a good fox in front you 'll find he won't tarry,
O'er ditch, bank, and stile he goes a rare buster,
Just follow his line and you 'll call him a thruster.

XIV.

Yet a Lord[5] and a Lady[6] from "Wynyard" hail,
Who are game for a gallop o'er hill and o'er dale ;
The Lord 's all for sport, the Lady so neat
Has the lightest of hands, and a very good seat.

[1] Jack Bevans. [2] First whipper-in. [3] Sir W. Eden, Bart. [4] Lord Henry Vane Tempest. [5] Lord Herbert V. Tempest. [6] Lady Aline V. Tempest (now Lady Aline Beaumont).

XV.

Greatham Village sends forth a sportsman[1] so bold,
That his love for the chase can never grow cold;
With face full of smiles rides up the "Hon. Sec.,"
Well mounted aud game to jump Stillington Beck!

XVI.

He's known to all farmers, and farmers' wives too—
For he's ready to settle each payment as due;
Every post brings a letter containing a bill,
But his happy face shows us he swallows the pill!

XVII.

A Colonel and Major from Preston-on-Tees,
Are seen trotting up on workmanlike "gees";
Their watchword is sport, their war-cry a find,
And we have *seen* the Major leave his Colonel behind.

XVIII.

The Colonel[2] is noted for judgment and wit,
And may he ere long in Parliament sit;
The Major[3] on "Emperor"'s oft seen in the van,
When the scent is breast high, and it 's "Catch 'em who can!"

XIX.

From Wolviston Hall, where we all like to meet,
Comes a Railway Director,[4] to see whom 's a treat;
E'er ready to advise and give of his bounty—
May he long prove a tower of strength to his county.

XX.

Next a tall man[5] from Stockton attention doth claim;
Tho' he wears a black coat, he is well known to fame—
Twenty stones o'er a country means a strong and game horse,
As he rides very hard—for a welter of course.

[1]Mr. Thomas Appleby. [2]Col. Sadler, now M.P. [3]Major Ropner, now Sir Robert Ropner, M.P. [4]Capt. Young (the late). [5]Mr. George Whitwell.

XXI.

Our heavy weight 's known in all show grounds and rings ;
If you want a good song, " Hearts of Oak " he oft sings ;
He spins a good yarn, and is ne'er known to ride
Without lights in his pocket and a shoe by his side.

XXII.

From Hartlepool West a glad troop is seen
To rein up their steeds on Great Stainton Green.
" Winthorpe House " is the home of one[1] who enjoys
A burst on his mare, tho' she makes a slight noise.

XXIII.

He 's not very light—neither old, nor yet young—
Whilst his heart is set right, and his nerves are well strung ;
From Kelloe to Wingate, and thence to the Dene,
A good thirty minutes in the front he 's oft seen.

XXIV.

From " Church Street," which sounds like the home of divines,
Sallies forth on his chestnut a merchant[2] in wines ;
From " Foggyfurze " too, one[3] who 's fond of a grey,
Both can ride when hounds run—aye, and show you the way.

XXV.

The " Willows " sends forth a good sportsman[4] and keen,
Tho' as oft as we 'd like he 's not with us seen ;
Last season he acted as mentor and guide
To a lady who seemed to enjoy a good ride.

XXVI.

Some quiet chaff 's heard on yon side of the green,
Where a sporting Divine and a Doctor are seen ;
Our Chaplain[5] is mounted on old " Protoplasm "—
Don't try to pronounce it 'twill give you a spasm !

[1]Mr: W. H. Fisher. [2]Mr. A. Baxter. [3]Mr. John Beach. [4]Mr. Geo. Pyman. [5]Rev. C. H. Ford.

XXVII.

The Doctor[1] looks game on his gallant bay brown,
Tho' he rides to see sport, he is not often down;
Should you get into grief you'll find him most handy,
His prescription,—a dose of the best orange brandy.

XXVIII.

His friend bestrides "Jumbo," inquisitive horse!
Who fathoms each ditch as a matter of course;
Uudaunted the Captain applies the cold steel—
Impressionless Jumbo—to whip and to heel!

XXIX.

Of Preston the Squire,[2] on a cantering hack,
Fourteen-two, and well shaped, with grand loins and back,
Has joined the gay throng and waits for a find,
To throw his leg o'er yon good hunter behind.

XXX.

The Norton division now draw into view,
Their number is seven, all good men and true;
From a find to a check, from a check to a kill,
Their motto is ever "Be with them I will"!

XXXI.

At the shrine of Diana staunch worshipper[3] long,
The "Norton House" gallant's fit theme for our song;
His heart's in the chase and the talk o'er the sport,
With his foxhunting friends, and some '51 port.

XXXII.

That brown horse knows how to make use of his weight,
And riderless once crashed thro' a new gate!
Nothing daunted his owner grasped hold of the mane,
And like "Richard" of old was himself soon again.

[1]Dr. Fenwick. [2]Mr. Marshall Fowler. [3]Mr. R. C. Denton.

XXXIII.

Next a jovial face[1] is seen rounding the bend,
And laughter and mirth are heard to ascend;
'Tis one who we know is fond of his pranks—
Tho' he 's leaving our country, may he still join our ranks.

XXXIV.

There 's a young man[2] well-turned-out on a brown horse,
Whose name 's in all books as a matter of course—
A light-hearted fellow who from all we can learn,
Sticks to it till hounds to their kennels return.

XXXV.

Note a fine slashing bay—note a black coat and cap;[3]
That pair will jump rails, and no timber will tap.
There 's reynard's staunch friend (like the rest of his kin)
At Whitehouse Plantation and famed Clement's Whin.

XXXVI.

We 'd well nigh forgotten a good sporting name,[4]
Without whose support all hunting is tame.
You may holloa and shout when it's up to the hocks,
But the essence of hunting is a stout-hearted *fox*.

XXXVII.

Tho' last, yet not least,[5] of this sporting division,
Well armed for the fray with both nerve and decision;
See one who at times on the stage gains a cheer,
Tho' we guess a view holloa to his heart is more dear!

XXXVIII.

We must not forget the young Squire of Elton,[6]
(Whose ancestors' fame in verse is oft dwelt on);
His get up 's too sombre—we 'd like something cheerier,
For what could look better than *pink* on "Siberia?"

[1] Mr. C. H. Backhouse. [2] Mr. J. W. Page-Page. [3] Mr. J. Stevenson.
[4] Mr. J. H. Fox (the late). [5] Mr. John Armstrong. [6] Mr. G. W. Sutton.

XXXIX.

In pink coat and cap, and mounted on "Billy,"
A keen sportsman[1] hies from Raisby so hilly;
He 'll break a tough fence, disdaining a roll,
Beaming like an M.P. at the head of the poll.

XL.

From Stockton there hails of a large firm the head,[2]
Whom love of the chase from his office hath led;
And many 's the day he has tested the sloughs
Of Catkill,* Dread Lane! and the neighbouring ploughs.

XLI.

They told us his brother,[3] a good friend and supporter,
With a doctor in town had taken his quarter;
But his presence doth prove there is only one cure,
A good forty minutes with a kill, to be sure!

XLII.

The Town Clerk, who interest takes in our runs,
Is well represented by two of his sons;[4]
E'er first at the meet, e'er last in the field,
In endurance and pluck to none they will yield.

XLIII.

An Estate Agent[5] too, respected by all,
With a lady[6] beside him has answered the call;
Two Doctors[7] whose patients no longer complain,
"The season 's commenced, and they 're sought for in vain."

XLIV.

What! an Alderman[8] thin! on a thoroughbred mare,
O'er a big place, by jove! he 'll make some of you stare;
A maker of mineral waters[9] well known;
Some dealers in horses,[10] and a man on a roan.

[1]Mr. Tait. [2]Mr. W. Watson. [3]Mr. Geo. M. Watson. [4]Mr. T. H. Faber and Mr. C. E. Faber. [5]Mr. Henry Curry. [6]Mrs. Curry. [7]Dr. Blandford and Dr. Hind. [8]Alderman G. F. Smith. [9]Mr. Christopher Jordison. [10]Messrs. William Armstrong and Co.

* Catkill Lane is a sea of mud in winter, well appreciated by novices in the hunting field! The real name is "Catkin" Lane, and as such it appears in ancient deeds dealing with the Barmpton property.

XLV.

From Auckland, far famed for its palace and park,
Where horsemen are rare (or they ride in the dark !),
A sporting Solicitor's[1] picked up the scent,
And to feeling long pent up will shortly give vent.

XLVI.

You don't often see on a Great Stainton day
Any lack of real bruisers from Darlington way :
And Neasham and Croft send forth a few swells
To show us the way over Newbiggen Stells.

XLVII.

From "Greystones" there hails a nailing good man,[2]
Whose coat tails are oft seen full sail in the van ;
O'er Bishopton pastures to Squire Sutton's gorse,
Till "bellows to mend" is the state of his horse.

XLVIII.

See, his brother[3] is riding to orders to-day,
For he pilots a lady light-hearted and gay ;
A good hunting run is their ambition and pride,
To ride they don't hunt, but for hunting they ride.

XLIX.

There's a young man[4] from town on a galloping sort,
Who likes a good start and doesn't mean being caught ;
Of chasing he's fond, and likes to be seen
Between flags much better than *on* them I ween.

L.

'Mongst others from Croft all spick and all span,
On a game-looking steed mark a hard-bitten man :[5]
From Ford's Whin last season he went a rare buster,
And when reynard's knell sounded was one of the muster.

[1] Mr. Dundas Bruce. [2] Mr. William Forster. [3] Mr. Joseph Forster.
[4] Mr. C. H. Jackson. [5] Captain J. Fife.

LI.

There are good men and true from Cleveland to-day—
There 's Skelton's young squire[1] on a neat-looking grey,
Whose ardour for sport is restrained by no bounds ;
He has an eye for a country, and an eye, too, for hounds.

LII.

From Stokesley old town our barrister friend[2]
(With whom 'tis a treat a month's yachting to spend),
Has taken in tow a traveller fleet,[3]
Who knows all the earths from "Potto" to Crete.

LIII.

To the strangers from Tyne and Sunderland, too,
(Who a day with the South Durham don't often rue),
One word of advice—at the ford wait your turn,
And don't try to fly the deep Woodham Burn !

LIV.

There 's a Marquis[4] (whose tastes are more for the flat
At Epsom or York) just raising his hat ;
And Triumvir's trainer[5] is not far behind
On a thoroughbred hack, impatient to find.

LV.

I 've hunted with Lambton now "Layton" exclaims,
With Johnson and Harvey, and other good names ;
My wife says "I 'm old, and from the sport must retire,"
But find a good fox, and you 'll see my old fire.[6]

LVI.

The Farmers have mustered in numbers to-day,
There are hard ones from Brierton and Butterwick way,
And Fishburn, and Trimdon, and Bishopton, too,
Each send forth their quota of good men and true.

[1]Mr. W. H. A. Wharton (now M.F.H.). [2]Mr. J. P. Sowerby. [3]Mr. John P. Denton (the late). [4]Marquis Talon. [5]Mr. John Coates. [6]Mr. Joseph Flavell.

LVII.

Two mounted, one afoot, are brethren three,
There 's Charley, and Richard, and Fred, you may see,[1]
They farm high they tell us, but little each heeds,
Tho' you ride o'er his turnips, his wheat, or his seeds.

LVIII.

Many others there are whose names we would add—
But we 've come to a check, and scent 's very bad ;
There are bruisers, and skirters, and men there are there,
Who holloa like mad tho' their *fox* is a *hare* !

LIX.

Let 's drink then the health of those who don't ride,
Tho' to aid us in funds is their object and pride ;
Who grant us their coverts, and prove that they see
That foxes and pheasants can quite well agree.

XL.

Drink, too, to the farmers—who help to show sport—
Our country's backbone—they 're all the right sort ;
Fill again for their wives whose butter and milk
Make the puppy's rough coat shine like satin and silk.

XLI.

Ere this feeble attempt at some verses we close,
Let us venture, kind friends, a last toast to propose ;
Success to fox-hunting ! Success to our pack !
Sound horses, good runs, and of foxes no lack !

1893 (OR TEN YEARS AFTER).

A decade has passed ! slight change in our ranks,
Still slighter in reynard ! he 's at the old pranks ;
And turkeys and pullets and housewives declare,
That in spite of *bad* times he lives on *good* fare,

[1] The three Robinsons.

MR. R. ORD.

Some good friends are missing—not many 'tis true,
Foxhunters live long, their ailments are few;
But of those who are gone, how fair is the fame,
How unstinted the praise, how scanty the blame!

No longer we hear Will Claxon's wild cheer,
He 's settled in trade—purveyor of beer—
No more do we list to Jack's "view holloa,"
His whip 's cast aside for a—gardener's hoe!

New master commands now, new servants in charge,
On whose merits 'tis not for us to enlarge;
Suffice it to say that the game 's kept alive,
With all the old spirit from eleven to five.

The old pack 's no more, yet still in our ear
Rings the music of "Betsy" and "Promise" so clear;
They 're gone, but their progeny 's well to the fore,
In colour, tongue, aye, and drive as of yore.

'Tis pleasant to dip thus into the past,
And long may the fame of the South Durham last;
No pack will be stauncher, no horsemen more keen,
When we muster next season on Great Stainton Green.

The season of 1883-4 was only a moderate one, few good days being recorded, though the Bishopton country was true to its prestige on November 23rd, when two first-class runs of fifty-three and seventy-five minutes were recorded. The first was after what was known during this season as the *Fox Hill* fox, whose line was invariably by Goosepool into the Hurworth country, and afforded excellent gallops on several days; notably on this day, and also on January 25th, 1884, seventy minutes; February 22nd, fifteen minutes, very fast; March 14th, thirty-five minutes. Still it was, on the whole, just as bad a scenting season as 1881-2 had been a good one, and though foxes were numerous, they seldom ran straight for any distance.

The last day is worthy of note, proving as it does that a lot of country may be drawn blank at the end of a season, when the earths are all open, even though foxes are pretty plentiful. The meet was at Great Stainton, and the following coverts were all drawn blank, though three brace of foxes had been found in a portion of the same country before 2-30 only three weeks before.—Lee Close, Bleach House plantation and moor, Mount Pleasant and Tilery woods, Byers Gill, Barmpton whin, Ketton Leazes, Woogrey, Fox Hill, Ford's whin, Clement's whin, California plantations, Scurfield's plantation, White House wood, Thorpe wood, Watts' plantation and moor. At ten minutes past six a fox was found in Homer Carr and the blank day was saved, but it proved a vixen and went to ground in an unknown earth on Mr. Flavell's farm. Neseless, Foxton plantation and Bog Hall were afterwards visited, but with no satisfactory result. This may be taken as the record "blank draw" during the last thirty years or more with the South Durham Hounds. No less than eighteen reliable coverts were called upon before hounds spoke to a fox. Time of draw, seven hours and ten minutes up to find. Mr. Ord was assiduous in his attention to the hounds, and whilst at home during the three years of his mastership, only missed being at the kennels on a Sunday afternoon on two occasions, not unfrequently walking there and back, eight miles. Mrs. Ord would very often drive there and walk home after tea.

In 1881-2 the total amount of subscriptions received amounted to £1,642 15s. 6d., including a donation of £27 19s. 6d., collected from hunting farmers by the late Mr. W. Madderson of Fishburn, a novelty by the way in hunting subscriptions, and greatly appreciated at the time. The total amount of fund for purchase of the hounds from

Sir William Eden amounted to £409 12s. 0d., and a sum of £450 was paid this year on this account, there being a slight deficiency on this head.

In 1882-3 the subscriptions to the Hunt, including donations to hound fund and deficit account, amounted to £2,134, the largest sum ever collected in the South Durham country, and this result was due in a great measure to the untiring energy of the Hon. Sec., Mr. Thomas Appleby of Greatham, who was an indefatigable "whip," and the generosity of the late Marquis of Londonderry and Sir William Eden, Bart., without whose aid the Hunt affairs might not have run so smoothly. In the spring of 1884, owing to the very bad times and other causes, the subscription list was considerably decreased, and Sir William Eden having intimated his readiness to take on the mastership of the hounds a second time, should it be so desired, he was re-appointed master of the South Durham Hounds with a guarantee of £900 per annum as before.

CHAPTER VI.

"The Hunt is up, the morn is bright and gray."

SIR WILLIAM'S second mastership lasted for six years, and was in every way again a most successful one. In the season 1884-5, the best days were November 13th, when hounds killed on the lawn at Elwick Hall, after fifty-five minutes; the following day, November 14th, when they found a brace at Sutton's whin and ran hard without a check to Saltergill (Captain Temple's place), in the Hurworth country; December 15th, when they had forty-five and fifty-five minutes, both very good, in the Butterwick country; and January 21st (the Croxdale Hall day), when they killed in the coal cellar adjoining the private chapel at Croxdale Hall,* after finding in the Mill wood, Rushyford, on a very windy day.

It was on November 26th, 1884, that a fox and four leading hounds were drowned in Heugh Hall pit shaft, as graphically narrated by Bevans.

1885-6 is described in the diary as the *very worst on record*, both as regards scent and stoppages owing to frost.

* Whilst the fox was being broken up on the lawn, old "Magnet" had a look round the larder, and made away with 8lbs. of beef and 6lbs. of sausages.

The writer spent more than half the season in Leicestershire, but Claxon's diary only corroborates the general impression left by the season's sport, and it was undoubtedly a lean one. Still there were two good Barmpton days, October 30th and November 27th; outlying foxes, whipped up by Jack Bevans, being responsible for the sport on each occasion.

A fine day's sport was witnessed on January 1st, 1886, when the townspeople mustered in force at Great Stainton, and shortly after hounds had been put into Lee Close, the large ash trees in the neighbourhood appeared suddenly to burst into human vegetation. A very large fox, and known to be the same one which had afforded a good gallop in the November previously, sailed away eastwards, but after ringing past Stillington Ironworks a second time, hounds began to close upon him, and he paid the penalty for an excessive celebration of Christmas festivities; time, forty minutes. This was followed by a splendid twenty minutes from Fox Hill, by Longnewton and Sadberge, and back to covert.

On January 4th, a good thirty-five minutes was recorded from the Black plantation, near Sedgefield station, to ground at Butterwick moor. A severe day must March 29th, 1886, have been. A good run in the morning from Jordison's moor terminated with a kill, and an "outlyer" from the neighbourhood of Nodding's whin in the afternoon, whose points were Wolviston village, Sunderland Gate, Close wood, Newton Hansard, Norton Ironworks, Wolviston (re-visited), and Wynyard again (when hounds were stopped), tried to the utmost the stamina of the best horses to be found in the Hunt, and with effect too, for Claxon's account of the day concludes with the ominous words—"all the horses beaten; Lord Londonderry on the road, and Sir William

and Bevans each leading their horses!" It must have been a gruelling run!*

To make up for the loss of sport occasioned by fog, frost and snow in this season, hounds hunted up to April 21st, which is unusually late in the South Durham Country.

The season of 1886-7 was, like its predecessor, unsatisfactory, owing to the long interregnum of frost and snow, which prevented all hunting from December 13th, 1886, to January 24th, 1887. Hounds were out on the 15th, but were driven home early by the snowstorm which burst over them, and continued more or less for six weeks.

The best day of the whole season, which was only on a par with the previous one so far as scent was concerned, was, as so often happens, from Bishopton on February 4th, 1887. Foxhill, true to its name and traditions, held a brace, one of which gave a sporting run of about 35 minutes, by Sadberge, Longnewton and Elton, to ground at Bewley Hill farm, in the same drain which afforded refuge to a fox on March 20th, 1885.† A second, and even better run from Oxeye ensued. Hounds fairly raced their fox by Elton and Hartburn, and running into view two fields from Sandy Lees, caught and killed him a few yards from the covert after a clinking forty-four minutes.

Towards the end of this season, William Claxon, who had been rapidly increasing in weight for some time, gave notice to Sir William of his intention to retire from the

* I went to the meet of the Belvoir hounds at Easton this day, intending to hunt with them, but before they moved off the Cottesmore hounds passed in full cry, and thinking 'a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush,' joined them, but had the worst of the exchange.

† This fox, it may be remembered by those who took part in the gallop, ran nearly three miles, and for 25 minutes bang up wind the whole way and in the teeth of a hurricane; a very unusual occurrence.

position of huntsman, and his place was filled up by the appointment of George Gillson from the York and Ainsty. Claxon had hunted the hounds since 1874, and in his prime displayed such ability with the horn, and indeed was in many ways such a valuable servant, that a brief notice of his career may commend itself to readers.

William Claxon was born at East Henningfield, Essex, on August 1st, 1843, and commenced his hunting career by obtaining a situation as second horseman to Nimrod Long, with the far-famed Brocklesby Hounds, in 1865, the very year, curiously enough, before John Bevans fulfilled the identically same position. Making way for Bevans in 1866, we find Claxon promoted to the post of second whipper-in to the Brocklesby, a service which was continued with satisfaction to his employer during the following season. Wishing to better himself, Claxon next applied for and obtained a place as first whipper-in with the Bicester, during the mastership of Sir Algernon Peyton, Bart. This was in 1868; and for the second time his vacant place at Brocklesby was filled up by Bevans, who thus became second whipper-in there. Geo. Boxall was the Bicester huntsman when Claxon joined that pack, and he continued to hunt the country until 1872, when Sir Algernon Peyton made up his mind to put forward Claxon as huntsman; unfortunately, shortly after his determination Sir Algernon died (March, 1872),* and was succeeded by Viscount Valentia in the mastership. The new master carried out the ideas of his predecessor, and Claxon held the horn in the season of 1872-3; as, also, in the

* Sir Algernon Peyton, who came of a great "four-in-hand" family died very suddenly from heart disease in the "King's Arms" yard at Bicester, on March 25th, 1872, after a day with his hounds; he had previously been master of the Bicester from 1861-3, and was now only in his fortieth year. His popularity in the Hunt was universal.

following season, 1873-4, when he left to join the South Durham as huntsman to Mr. John Harvey. Viscount Valentia, it may be remembered, was anxious to hunt the hounds himself two days a week during the season of 1874-5, and it was this curtailment of his duties which no doubt led to Claxon's giving up a service which he had filled with conspicuous ability.

Claxon acted as huntsman of the South Durham, Sir William Eden's hounds, and again of the South Durham for thirteen successive years, *i.e.*, from 1874 to 1887; when he retired, owing to increasing weight, after a service of twenty-two years with hounds, during fifteen of which he carried the horn. As a huntsman he displayed considerable skill, having great control over his temper as well as over his hounds, and being gifted with wonderful patience; his hounds were fond of him, and he excelled in kennel management and general knowledge of what a foxhound ought to be; if he had a fault it was a too great fondness for the use of the horn in calling hounds together after a covert or gorse had been drawn blank, the result being that foxes stole away from their kennels down wind, and "stale lines" were occasionally indulged in. But Claxon will always be best known as part only of an extraordinary combination, consisting of himself as huntsman, and Jack Bevans as first whipper-in; it was in this dual capacity, or combination, that the talents of both working together were fully displayed; whilst Claxon may be said to have had a marvellous control over his *hounds*, Jack Bevans had similarly an almost superhuman control over the *fox*; he knew instinctively where he was to be found, and was continually turning him up in a fallow field, a thick fence, or a solitary patch of gorse; the same instinct seemed to tell him what would be reynard's

WILLIAM CLAXON—1874.

line when found, nay, even the earth in which he would go to ground, or attempt to go, perhaps, only to find that it had been previously visited by the ubiquitous whip! Like freemasons, the two worked unselfishly together, without sign or sound to the casual observer, and the result cannot be said to have been to the disadvantage of those who threw in their fortunes with the South Durham Hounds.

"Each played his part, and played it well—
Who played it best 'twere hard to tell."

On his retirement from the position of huntsman, Claxon was presented with a suitable testimonial in the shape of a purse of money by the subscribers to the Hunt, and many friends he had made amongst the tenant farmers in the country, with whom he was always deservedly popular. After a short sojourn at Sedgefield he became mine host of an inn at Little Bytham, near Grantham, but trade being slack there, he subsequently (in 1890) became landlord of the Commercial Hotel, Castle Eden, where his business prospered, and where unfortunately he died on Saturday, August 22nd, 1903. He was twice married, his second wife, who survives him, being a daughter of the late John Coates, for many years private trainer to the late Earl of Zetland, and afterwards to the late Marquis Talon, who kept his horses in the stabling attached to the present kennels; the hounds were then located at Rushyford.

The Season of 1887-8 augured well at the start, the November sport being particularly good, especially on November 21st when fifty-seven minutes and a kill, and twenty-five minutes to ground were recorded; and on the two following hunting days from meets at Travellers' Rest and Great Stainton, both of which are marked in letters of

red in the hunting diary. On the latter day, November 25th, a Bog Hall fox stood up for an hour and twenty-five minutes before the hounds, darkness saving his life close to Sedgefield village. A month later this same fox was found at Bog Hall again, and after running almost the identical line as in November for an hour was curiously enough killed in Sedgefield village, no one being within hail of the pack at the finish. Although the rest of the season was of a pretty open character sport was extremely disappointing, and a third consecutive moderate season has to be recorded. At the end of the season Gillson,* who was a very fine horseman, left to carry the horn for Mr. W. Baird in the Cottesmore Country, and was succeeded by William Sheppard, who came with good credentials from the Oakley, where he had officiated as first whipper-in for four seasons, having previously been with the South Oxfordshire. Sheppard was fortunate in falling in with better weather and scents than had prevailed for some three seasons, and there was a succession of good things for supporters of the South Durham during November and December, 1888. Although records of runs are for the most part interesting only to those who participated in them, still as many, possibly, into whose hands these pages may fall, may know the country well, and be able to follow the line of route pursued—an impartial account which appeared in the *Field* newspaper at the time, is here inserted, and it is again curious to note that three of the best days' sport in the season 1888-9, resulted after meeting under the blue clock at the far-famed Bishopton village.†

* George Gillson died in the spring of 1903 after hunting the Cottesmore Hounds thirteen years.

† Mr. Ord was so fond or meeting there that he once advertised a meet for Good Friday; a

"Few packs have probably enjoyed better sport than has fallen to the lot of the South Durham foxhounds during the past few weeks, and after such an auspicious commencement, with a good show of cubs in all the best portions of the country, there is every prospect of an "old-fashioned" season, provided only that the elements, which have been anything but kind to Sir William Eden, the popular M.F.H., during his successive masterships, are fairly propitious this winter. The following is an outline of the sport enjoyed since October 31st. Met at Sands Hall and were favoured with a fine hunting morning, the "going" being much improved by the rain of the previous day. The wind being westerly, drew Bog Hall covert first, and had some difficulty in dislodging a fine cub from the thick gorse, scent in covert being *nil*; but once away a change came over the scene, and hounds ran very merrily over the Spring Lane to Neseless, where reynard tarried not, making Homer Carr his point, and here he was bowled over after a lively twenty-seven minutes. Picked up a fresh line just outside the plantation, and raced behind the flying bitch pack over a stiffish line of country to the north of Foxton, back to Bog Hall covert, where we had a minute or two's breathing time; ousted him out, and ran into him in the open on the east side of the Spring Lane near Foxton; time, twenty-five minutes. This was a good game cub, and more than a match for the leading hound, which faced him but did not care to tackle him single-handed.

Friday, November 2nd, was a pouring wet day, hardly

few days after he received the following note from the sporting Vicar of Bishopton, The Rev. C. H. Ford: "My Dear Ord,—This is a true story. One of my Sunday School teachers asked one of her scholars yesterday, in Bishopton School, 'what happens on Good Friday?' *Answer*: 'The hounds meet at Bishopton!' Fact sir. 'Comment superfluous.' Yours, &c., C. H. Ford."

fit for a dog to be out in, hounds returning to the kennels early. The Holdforth Bar day, on November 5th, which opened the regular hunting season, was one which will not be easily forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to taste of its sweets, and His Excellency the Marquis of Londonderry, who had been enjoying a day or two's hunting with these hounds whilst visiting his Wynyard seat for a brief period of rest after his heavy responsibilities in Ireland, will carry back with him a vivid recollection of the handsome bitch pack, which was again out, flying over the sound grass pastures that lie to the east and north of Sedgefield, and handling their fox at Bishop Middleham village, after as pretty a thirty minutes as the imagination of the most ardent votary of the sport could portray. The diary of the day's proceedings reads:—Met at Holdforth Bar, drew Sprucely and Hardwick Lake bottoms blank; found in the old covert, and, favoured with a holding scent, made our way at a good pace past the Tilery wood, Black plantation, leaving Sedgefield station on the right, our fox pointing for Morden. Finding hounds unpleasantly near he bore to the left, and we got right up to him at Fir-tree Hill plantation, whence we had a scurry to the Brakes, running into him near Mr. C. Robinson's house, after a fast twenty-five minutes, during which much hard riding was displayed, and one or two good men "took a toss." Tried one or two small plantations and Bradbury gorse, where a cub had unfortunately been chopped in covert a short time before, without response, and then trotted off to Milburn's whin, which held a leash—chopped one, bad luck to it, just as he broke, and got away on another's brush, running at a tremendous pace parallel with the Sedgefield road for a mile, and then in a north-westerly direction, crossed the Durham

road between Sedgefield and the Asylum, rattled him to Knotty Hill, then over the low lying land to Bishop Middleham Colliery, and killed in the open at the north side of Bishop Middleham village, after a grand thirty minutes. The Order was then "home."

Friday, November 9th, Bishopton the meet, and a little bird whispering that Fox Hill would probably be the first draw, caused a hard riding company to assemble, including a well mounted party from Wynyard. The bird was right for once in a way, for we made direct for Fox Hill, chopping a craven cub in a hedge-row *en route*. The good old whin held at least a brace, and we were treated to a really nice fast hunting run, embracing a six-mile point, the line traversed being across the far-famed Newbiggen pastures, where we had to fly one or two stiffish drains, or "stells," right up to Ford's whin, and on along the bottoms as if for Stillington Ironworks, which were passed at some distance on the left, reynard making for Maudlin Gutter and Whitton whin, which he skirted. Disdaining the Wynyard woods, which lay in front of him, he pointed northwards, and hounds carried the line almost up to Watt's plantation, but could not speak to him in covert, and so the run terminated, the gallant pack being fairly run out of scent after a very enjoyable fifty-five minutes. An easy jog brought us back to Ford's whin, where "pug" lay waiting for us and afforded a very brisk gallop to Lee Close. Here two or three "fresh members" cropped up, but hounds stuck to their hunted fox; drove him out of covert, and worked on a coldish scent nearly up to Bishopton, where further pursuit was abandoned. There never was a brilliant scent, still this was an excellent day's sport, and the country rode to perfection."

The same correspondent is responsible for an account of the second good day from Bishopton on November 30th, but it may be summed up briefly as follows:—Lee Close blank; found at Elstob (Lord Henry Vane Tempest somehow getting away alone with hounds) and with a burning scent raced past Stainton Hill House, Newton Ketton to Barmpton, where we cut off a corner, and closed with the leader. Bearing to the left we passed Burdon village, and visited the Hurworth country, killing a mile south of Burdon, after a perfect thirty-eight minutes without a check. Drew Fox Hill blank, and were approaching Sandy Lees when Jack Bevans' holloa was heard amongst some patches of whin at the west side, and we rattled away past Longnewton, through Burn Wood and past Urlay Nook, where reynard got to ground, after thirty minutes, which was generally allowed to be even better than the first fine gallop. The third Bishopton Day was on December 21st, about three weeks later; and the sport consisted of a fast hunting run of fifty-five minutes from Redmarshall whin in the morning, followed by a really grand gallop of an hour and ten minutes from Oxeye in the afternoon, by Gateley Moors, Bishopton whin, Lee Close, Carlton Ironworks, Whitton whin, Watt's plantation, to Homer Carr, and thence by Layton into Wynyard, where pursuit was abandoned—a nice point of between five and six miles. Two better days than those last recorded no one need wish for, and the following took part in the "good things" on one or both days:—Sir William Eden, Bart. (master), His Excellency the Marquis of Londonderry, The Marchioness of Londonderry, Lady Aline Vane Tempest, Mrs. Ord, Mr. W. Forbes (master of the Hurworth), Major Cosmo Little, Captains Towers-Clark, H. White and O'Shaunessy, and Messrs. T. Appleby,

W. Briggs, Sowerby, Ord, Matthews, Straker, Scurfield, W. Forster, Park, Col. C. J. Reed,* Fox, Walton, R. C. Denton, Page-Page, and a host of others.

It was about this time that there was a regular steeplechase from Camp whin by the Glebe whin, over the Raisby Hill railway, ending with a kill in the open at Quarrington Hill. Sir William Eden has often told me, that though this gallop was over a bad piece of country it was about the fastest thing during his mastership. During the course of the run a big fence flanked with several strands of signal wire rope on a railway was encountered; this though not very encouraging at the start, Sir William and Mrs. Ord successfully negotiated; Sheppard, who followed, came a fearful "purler" over it, and this practically stopped the rest of the field; the leaders had to top more wire-rope and a stiff gate to keep on terms with the hounds, but were rewarded by seeing them bowl over their fox in the open—a satisfactory termination to what must have been a "perilous ride"—as it was several minutes before the hunt servants or any one else "got the country," and came up to them.

Although the early months of 1889 provided no sport worthy of comparison with that of the November and December previous, still there were some useful days, and the season of 1888-9 may be reckoned on the whole as a good one, though not in the first-class.

It was at the end of this season that John Bevans terminated his long connection with the South Durham Hunt, the post vacated by him being filled by Charles Smith from the Oakley.

John, or as he was always called "Jack," Bevans

* A keen foxhunter of the old school, who loved hunting for hunting's sake. He was fond of telling a good story of how when hounds checked during a run, on a very wet day, at the low end of Catkill lane, which was a veritable bog and quagmire, he observed a yokel poking about in the bottomless mud with a stick. "Have you lost something, my man," he said,—"Lost summat!" said the disconsolate moke owner, "ar hae that! A'rs seeking for a cuddy and a sack o' flour!"

narrates his reminiscences in the succeeding chapters in practically his own words, and tells the story of his life which need not be repeated here. He was not anxious to obtrude his quaint doings and sayings upon the world, but many who hunted with him have not once, but repeatedly expressed a wish that they might be in possession of an authentic record of the principal of them, and it only remains to hope and trust that they may receive some gratification from a perusal of his narrative. Undoubtedly the great secret of Bevans' success as a first whipper-in lay in his extraordinary knowledge of *Woodcraft*. His own words "Educated with the Keepers" meant a great deal more than at first sight appears. The "keepers" were the servants of the keenest fox-preserver of the day, who would have foxes and pheasants, and succeeded in having what he desired, and Bevans' education in the woods gave him an insight into the habits, methods, and peculiarities of a fox which a town-bred youth, who aspires to be a hunt servant, never does and never can acquire; he was an apt pupil, being somewhat of the terrier nature himself, tracking a fox by nose and spoor, making a mental note of everything that tended to throw light upon its presence in any given spot; its probable line if disturbed, its action if headed, dependent, of course, upon what he heard or observed in the distance or noticed on the horizon; the darting or swooping flight of a rook, the crow of a cock pheasant as he rose all disturbed to his perch; the long sustained chatter of a magpie,* even the frightened call of a blackbird all

* Bevans could always tell from the movements of magpies whether there was a fox about; I remember once hounds crossing from Stillington Moors to Brunton's plantation (now called Howe Hills plantation); "Jack" galloped on to the south-west corner; as I passed him he said "There 's a brace afoot there; there 's magpies chattering on two different lines," and true enough when hounds were put in out came a brace of foxes.

JOHN BEVANS—1881.

conveyed valuable information to Bevans, whose ears were ever ready to receive it, whilst his extraordinary quickness of sight enabled him to view almost to a certainty any fox appearing at any time in the open, whether in front of him, behind or on either side; it was this eagle's eye, combined with a knowledge of the fox's habitat, on a fine day or wet day, morning or afternoon, that rendered him such an incomparable and reliable finder of the "varmint" at all times, especially in the spring of the year; and it is certain that if in passing by, he once observed a fox's "kennel" or similar indication in rough grass, rushes, whin covert or elsewhere, he never rode past the spot again without a searching crack of the whip, to be so frequently followed by his loud and well drawn out view holloa!

Some croakers might say that Bevans was too much wrapped up in the fox to see what hounds were doing, but his eye was upon both, and he could tell you at any moment of the day how many couple of hounds were missing (if any), and their names as well. Strangers often made trial of him in this way, but never caught him napping. He knew most of the foxes in the country by sight (as a shepherd does his sheep), and once amused Mr. Forbes and his faithful servant, Robin Taylor (who tells the story), at a corner of Fox Hill covert by his remark when a strange fox broke covert, and whipped back again. Bevans was engaged taking up his new leathers a hole, when out popped a fine and apparently fairly old fox close to him, "Well I'm d—d," he burst forth, to think that I've been fifteen years in this country, and seen an old fox that I don't know: I ought to be transported!"

Bevans was always scrupulously polite to ladies, and never would say or do anything to offend them if possible.

One afternoon he was despatched by Sir William Eden to call their attention to the fact that several of them were riding over seeds, or newly-sown wheat. He trotted up pretty near to them, and then in a loud voice called out, "Now, *gentlemen*, do, if you please, 'ware seeds," laying great stress on the word "gentlemen." This always was his dodge to set ladies right in the hunting field.

Mr. W. Scarth-Dixon, well known as "British Yeoman" of the *Sporting Times*, is fond of telling a story connected with a day's hunting in the South Durham country, in Mr. Harvey's time. Hounds were running nicely over some wet rushy pastures near Newbeggin, when finding himself alongside Bevans he passed the remark, "This is what I call 'three acres and a cow' land Jack!" Jack's eye twinkled, and a grin came over his face as he smartly replied, "I'd be d—d sorry for the cow" and quickly disappeared thro' a forbidding looking bullfinch!

No one could proclaim a "view holloa" with a finer, cheerier note, and when at an earth-stopper's dinner or similar festive occasion, Bevans was asked to sing a song or make a speech he always said, "I can't make a speech, but I can give you a toast"—

> Horses sound, and hounds healthy:
> Earths well stopped, and foxes 'plenthy.'"

Then he would say, "I can't sing, but I can holloa," and "holloa" he did to the satisfaction of all.

History relates that on one occasion the company was so pleased with "Jack's toast," that he was invited by special request to give another. He rose solemnly, and said, "It's not much of a toast, but it's the only bit of poetry I know connected with a fox." The words were—

> "Little he thought, when first he started,
> That his mask and his brush would soon be parted!"

REMINISCENCES . .
OF A . . . . . .
FIRST WHIPPER-IN.

CHAPTER VII.

Bevans' Story.

"One science only will one genius fit,
So vast is art, so narrow human wit."

I WAS born at Limber, near Brocklesby, in Lincolnshire, on December 10th, 1844, and would probably be a year or two older than Mr. J. M. Richardson,† whose father was a large gentleman farmer residing there. A rare game sporting youth was Mr. Richardson, and one for whom I always had great admiration. My father managed the dairy farm and my mother the poultry farm at Brocklesby, to which place they removed from Limber when they got fairly settled

† Mr. J. Maunsell Richardson, the celebrated steeplechase rider, who won the Grand National in 1873 on "Disturbance," and the following year on "Reugny." He went to Harrow School in 1861, entering old "Ben" Drury's house, and had not been long there before he displayed extraordinary skill and activity (whence his nickname of "Cat") at all games. In 1864-5 he became a member of both the cricket and football elevens, and also won the challenge racquet. The first time I ever saw him on horseback, though well nigh forty years ago, is imprinted so deeply on my memory that it seems but yesterday. His riding costume was white flannels, for a Sixth Form game was being played on the school cricket ground and Richardson was, I fancy, fielding at long-leg; at any rate during the progress of the game the old brown horse, whose daily occupation was to draw the ground roller, happened to be grazing in the vicinity, and attracting his attention up he jumped on to the old fellow's back, and round the field they galloped, reinless and saddleless, the future Grand National winner urging on his laggard mount with legs and arms until they threatened to demolish the pitch that had been carefully prepared under the auspices of "Fred" Ponsonby and "Bob" Grimston. Amusing as it was to the boys, these grand old tutors of Harrow cricket failed to appreciate the sporting by-play!

down in married life; there I was brought up, and "educated with the keepers" between the age of ten and seventeen years; I mean, of course, the keepers of the Earl of Yarborough, grandfather of the present Earl. The then Earl was in rather feeble health, and spent very little time at Brocklesby. I used to go to school in the summer, and hunted and shot in the winter, running after the hounds on foot, and caring nothing if I finished twelve or fourteen miles from home. When eighteen years of age, I went to service as under-groom with Mr. Pygott at East Holton, on the marsh land, and was with him just one year. Mr. Pygott was the owner of an old and well-known steeplechaser called "Bridegroom," a horse which came into his possession just before I left his service. My next situation was with Mr. George Walker of Bigby Hall, about four miles from Brigg, where formerly lived the Barnards, who were great hunting people. Mr. George Walker was a gentleman farmer, and trained steeplechase horses. I lived in the house, and acted as groom and rough rider, a business for which in those days I was well adapted, as I did not set much value either on my neck or my horse. I rode the horses over fences in their work, and in trials, and was very fortunate in not getting any bad falls, but there was a very good stable full of horses, such as "Pigeon" and "Pensioner," and "Patience," and "Brother to Patience." "Pigeon" won nearly all the handicap steeplechases that he was asked to, at Lincoln, York, Doncaster, Croydon, etc. Mr. George Walker and his brother, Robert, generally rode the horses themselves, and both were clinking good horsemen. Mr. Robert* trained at Somerby about a mile off.

* A good story is still told of Mr. Robert riding in a race during a high wind, when the words "Pull, Bob, pull, for God's sake pull," were wafted from the distance post to the stand, but it proved to be the voice of a disappointed backer of another horse.

Brother to "Patience" was a good young horse, six years old, and ran third to Mr. Chaplin's "Emperor II" in the Great National Steeplechase at Wetherby in 1863 or 1864.† Mr. George Walker was "up," but broke a stirrup leather after going half a mile, and could have been second. He was bid a good price for the horse at the meeting, but refused it, and sent him home at once. Whilst being shunted at Barnetby Junction a collision took place, and the box in whioh he was in was smashed up all to pieces, and the horse, of course, killed. It was a great loss, as he was a wonderful good horse, and I beat Cortolvin, who, afterwards in 1867 won the Grand National (having also run second to Salamander in 1866) on him in a trial. We had a big saddle bag on "Brother to Patience," full up, but I never knew what the weights were, and they took care that I didn't handle it either! They were particularly "fly" about my never knowing the weights, or anything of that sort. I wanted to get into a hunting stable, or be with fox-hounds, so I gave them notice, his Lordship, at Brocklesby, having promised me a situation as soon as one was vacant.

I may add that it was with regret that I heard of the death of Mr. George Walker in March of this year, 1903, at the age of seventy years. I believe Mr. Robert is still alive.

It was in the year 1865 that I went to Brocklesby as under-kennelman for one year, and was then put on as second horseman to Nimrod Long, the huntsman. Nimrod Long was a first-rate huntsman, but best of all perhaps in the kennel, for he was a great hound man; he had a beautiful seat on a horse, but I always thought that his heart was not quite right for cross-country work; he seemed to

† Probably in 1864, as the Grand National Hunt Steeplechases were held at Market Harborough in 1863.

me, who was then one of the break-neck division, to look at danger where it was not; my service as second horseman to him lasted for two seasons, and then I became second whipper-in for a couple of seasons to the leading pack of the time. I had comfortable "apartments" at the kennels, and liked the business as second whipper-in, but eventually gave it up to see a change, as so many other servants do, sometimes to their own loss. One particularly good run, whilst I was with the Brocklesby, is still in my mind; it was from Irby Holme, at least that is where we met. I cannot, at the moment, remember the name of the wood where we found, but it was an old, big wood belonging to Squire Tomlin. Lady Yarborough rode "Shamrock," a grey gelding about sixteen hands high. We went at a tremendous pace over Stallingborough marshes, pointing for East Holton, racing past Thornton College and Goxhill; then bearing to the left, killed our fox at Wootton. Her Ladyship rode bang in front all the way, and the good horse she rode died at Wootton; it did not die from being over-ridden, as it appeared to be fresh at the end of the run, but must have been troubled with heart disease. The run was a nine mile point. My mount was a chestnut mare we got from Cheltenham. Alfred Thatcher, father of the present Cottesmore huntsman, was first whipper-in to the Brocklesby at this time; he was a rattling good horseman and whipper-in. The Earl of Yarborough was not a splasher, but rode nice cattle, and took great interest in hunting matters. He quite enjoyed the sport, though not in the best of health at the time; and, considering all things, he saw as much as most people who were out. We had a splendid stable of horses at Brocklesby; there was no better hunting stable in the world; there were *eighty* horses, and not a bad one amongst

the lot, which is saying a good deal. The Earl of Yarborough died in 1875, at the early age of forty-one. From Brocklesby I went to the Vale of White Horse as second whipper-in for one season, after which I became first whipper-in for two seasons. I remember that the year I went to the Vale of White Horse was 1870, because we were out at exercise with hounds, and went to see an old woodman who lived in Ayley wood, adjoining Cirencester big wood, about some cubs. The old man was reading the newspaper when we arrived, and told us that war had been declared between France and Prussia. I might here mention that William Claxon, afterwards for so many seasons huntsman of the South Durham, was second horseman to Nimrod Long before I was; then he was put on as second whipper-in at Brocklesby for a couple of seasons; then he went to the Bicester for some six seasons; and, finally, we met again as huntsman and first whipper-in of the South Durham in 1874.

Sir William Throckmorton was master of the Vale of White Horse whilst I was there. Bob Worrall* was hunts-

* Robert Worrall was born at Kineton, June 10th, 1835, and is still hearty and in comfortable circumstances. At the age of ten he went as kennel boy to the Warwickshire, under Ned Stevens, the huntsman. Stevens placed great confidence in him, and when he was but thirteen years old sent him with two couples of bitches to Mr. Drake's kennels at Bucknall, a distance of twenty-five miles, which he walked in one day, returning safely the next (a wild November day), though he arrived in the darkness, and "very beat." In 1853 he became second horseman at Kineton to Jack Jones, and after three years' service went to the North Staffordshire as second whip under Joe Maiden, but left at the end of a splendid season's sport because Joe Maiden "could not sleep himself, and took good care that no one else did near him!" Maiden would have hounds out at exercise at 4 a.m. in the summer! In 1858 Worrall went as first whipper-in to the Bicester under Ben Goddard. Mr. T. T. Drake was now in his second mastership, and of him Worrall writes "There never were three men that beat him and his brothers, Mr. Edward and Mr. George." In 1862 Worrall was first whipper-in to the Warwickshire; in 1863 first whipper-in to the Bicester (in Mr. Drake's third mastership), remaining there until Mr. Drake gave up in 1866. In the following year Worrall became huntsman to the Warwickshire under Mr. Spencer Lucy, retiring in 1869, because Mr. Lucy wished to hunt hounds two days a week himself. The same year saw him hunts-

man, a good man to hunt a country; he was a very good all-round man; we just "fell-out" once, and then had a good clean reckoning up; it was over a hound, and all about nothing! I stuck up for my rights, and he got out of temper. He says, when in a road, "Jack, that mare will jump this wall." He had no sooner said the words than I was over. When we got into the field there was a hound or two short; one poor beast, that had been tied up all its life and was not accustomed to jumping walls, stood "yelping" near, so he turned round on to me a little bit sharp. I said to him "you suggested that the mare would jump the wall, and I did so in case anything should happen, such as a hare getting up, for instance." When we got home, he said, "Jack (apologising), I was wrong, and I hope you won't think anything more about it." I said, "of course, I knew I was right!" The fact is the mare was for him to ride, and what he wanted was to see how she shaped herself at a fair stiff jump (it was close on five feet high), and there is no doubt but that he was experimenting on me; but I was something to take on in those days, as I cared for nothing, and I don't suppose a great quantity of people cared much for me! We had some capital sport with the Vale of White Horse, one run I remember in particular: the Duke of Beaufort had had an extraordinary run on Ash Wednesday, February 22nd, 1871, when I believe the Badminton hounds met at Swallet's gate, in the Christian Malford man to the Vale of White Horse under that good sportsman, Sir W. Throckmorton, Bart. Sir William was an excellent master, and mounted his men so well that at the end of the season of 1874 Worrall was able to say, "We had a fine season; hunted ninety-five days, killed 105 foxes, and I had not a single fall throughout the season." In 1876 Worrall went to the old Berkeley under Mr. Longman for nine seasons; in 1885 to Sir Richard Sutton (Craven); after two seasons Sir Richard gave up, and Worrall's long service of forty-two years with hounds came to end. He never left a situation without a testimonial from the country, and present from the master—a fine record, and one worthy of imitation by all Hunt Servants.

country, near Dauntsey station on the Great Western Railway. They found their fox at Gretenham great wood, and ran to ground after a grand gallop of three and a half hours on the Swindon side of Highworth, and a point of fourteen miles; this will always be known as the Greatwood run, and ours was practically the Greatwood run reversed; it took place on the Thursday fortnight after the Duke's historical run. Bob Worrall was laid up with cold at the time, so Sir William Throckmorton* would hunt hounds himself. I was second whipper-in, and Sir William despatched me to the end of Red Lodge wood, which was skirted in the Greatwood run, and took the first whip into covert with him; "if a fox goes away," he says to me, "you holloa with might and main"; the Red Lodge wood was a long wood running parallel with the Great Western Railway. I 'd no sooner got there than out comes a great whacking fox, more like a wolf than any I had seen before, and crosses the line of railway; we jumps on to the line, the master and myself; I was riding "Cremorne"† a pie-bald horse, good looking as ever you clapped eyes on! We got on to the line and out of it, the master and myself, safely,

* "One of the best masters that ever saw light," says Worrall, and from all I have heard, he speaks correctly. He mounted his servants on the very best of cattle, and they seldom got down, though parts of the country required negotiating! "Cock Roach," "Blue Peter," "Lady Alice," "Lady Jane" and "Bluebell" were all greys, and grand performers, whilst no better hunters ever looked through a bridle than "Hendon" and "Haversley."

†"Cremorne" was really a skewbald horse, sixteen h.h., and something quite out of the common. As a five year old he was purchased by Mr. T. T. Drake, M.F.H., from Mr. Painter, horse dealer, Bicester, and ridden by "the Squire" a couple of seasons; then he was sold for about four-hundred guineas to Lord Calthorpe, after which he changed hands several times, until Captain Wharton Wilson, M.F.H. bought him for Stephen Goodall to ride in the V.W.H. Country. When Sir William Throckmorton succeeded as M.F.H. in the V.W.H. Country, the old horse remained at the kennels, and carried Worrall two seasons, then Jack Bevans rode him, and finally Will. Wells, who was astride him when he slipped into a huge deep ditch, near Highworth, and broke his back. Worrall's portrait was painted on this grand horse, and the hound, Nimrod, is in the picture.

to my surprise; but, two fields further on, the master comes down a "bowler." I caught his horse, and he jumped on again wonderfully quickly for a heavy man, only saying "bad luck." Three fields further on, down he comes again over a bit of timber, and rolls ever so far into the next field; I quickly caught his horse again, and we ran to the Thames embankment (not in London, but in Wiltshire), where we had the first slight check; so far we had come seven miles, never touching a covert, or any place of shelter for a fox; it was all over a clean piece of wild, open country; a beautiful country if you were mounted on a good horse, but you would soon be in difficulties on a bad one. Big flying fences there were, and lots of open water and timber. I turned old pie-bald's head to a big drain, and we got over safely; this passed, I rammed into the Thames and got a ford, and crossed over, when I at once saw the fox running round an elbow of the river, and he was headed back somehow over the water again; I did my best to get hounds turned, and had just got them on to the line again, when a fearful thunderstorm* burst over us, with rain and hail; we carried on to Down Amney, about three miles north of Cricklade, after crossing the Severn canal, but scent now failed, and this concluded the day's proceedings. A good nine mile point over a lovely bit of country, and for a long distance, field for field, the same as the Greatwood run reversed. Amongst those who were out were Lord Folkestone, Mr. Wilson, late master of the Vale of White Horse; Mr. Gosling, M.F.H.; and a very large field; I cannot say whether there was much grief, as it took me all my time to look after my own and Sir William's horses.

* "The sky grew black, the scent grew worse,
Enough to make a parson curse!"

We had another good day on an Ash Wednesday from Ten Rides, Cirencester woods, through Ayley woods, and straight into the Duke of Beaufort's country. The Duke of Beaufort had had a big day's sport, as usual, on Ash Wednesday, and some of his patrons had got home when we ran in front of Mr. Chaplin's house near Tetbury. When they saw or heard us coming they jumped on to hacks or anything they could get hold of, and joined us, and we killed our fox about a mile further on. I cannot at this length of time give the name of the place, but I well remember the gents that joined us. Some ran on foot, though in scarlet, because they couldn't get horses at the moment, and there was a large house party at Mr. Chaplin's. The point of this run was always said to be eleven miles. I rode a young horse *about twenty years old*. He was called "the young horse" because he had been bought in London the year before as a nine year old horse, but they had him at Brocklesby seven years before this, and he had *then* been bought off a Captain Ayre as twelve years old! I knew his age perfectly well, as I rode him when at Brocklesby, and I shall never forget him. It was in 1870, the year the Prusso-Franco War broke out. I remember that I first went to the Vale of White Horse Kennels, and saw old Mr. Parsons, the stud groom, walking the "young horse," who had been blistered, about. I ventured to remark, "You have a good looking old gentleman here, governor, with real good neck and shoulders." "Yes," he said, "you'll have to travel a long way before you see another made like him." I said, "If he had a new pair of fore-legs he'd be a thundering good looking horse." He grunted out "He would." "I think I've seen him before," said I. "Never," said he; "Sir William's brother bought him off Myers in London last June, as nine years

old." I suddenly remembered that the horse I thought he was had a twitch mark on his right ear, and looked for it—it was there. So I says "I know 'him,' and I think that he knows me." I held up my hand, and he came at me like a tiger with his ears back, and that satisfied me, as it was an old complaint of his when he was teased. "Why," I said, "it's old 'Dragon,' and he's nineteen!" He carried me as second whipper-in one season after this, and part of another, when he broke down, and I shot him—as good and game a horse as ever looked through a bridle. He was twenty-two when I shot him, poor old fellow, and one of the hardest pullers I ever rode. He would have hold of the bridle, and if you slacked his head you couldn't tell where either he or you were going.

There was no finer sportsman than Dr. Wells in the Vale of White Horse country. One day when we were in the Braydon country and passing the Doctor's house a bitch called "Wanton," by the "Fitzwilliam Somerset," caught sight of a pet fox chained up, and promptly killed it. I said to Worrall, "blessed if old 'Wanton' hasn't killed the Doctor's tame fox!" He said, "there'll be the devil to pay!" Next morning comes a letter from the Doctor, as follows:—"Dear Worrall, what devils your hounds are, they killed my tame vixen to-day; would not have had it happen for £100."

Next time "Wanton" was out on that side of the country, up came the Doctor at the meet and said, "have you that old devil out that killed my vixen?" Worrall said "there she is," and the Doctor said, "by God, she looks like killing anything"; and he wasn't far wrong, for when she was out with some whelps in the summer following, one of the kennel cats came rather too near her and she "chawed" it up in a twinkling!

Worrall and I worked hand in glove together now. They were real good farmers and puppy-walkers in the Vale of White Horse country; good all-round fox-hunting men, and a good collection of sporting farmers were present at every meet; not badly mounted, too, and keen as a "jorum" of mustard. For example there was Mr. R. Cradock, of Bibury, a noted fox preserver, and to whom many gave the credit of having brought the Greatwood fox from Devonshire, and turned him down in Tadpole gorse. This gentleman was very particular about where the "field" went on his land, and some queer stories used to be told of his language to those who offended in this respect. One day a gentleman and young lady unfortunately trespassed on the wrong side of the covert, when Mr. R. Cradock dropped his eye on them, and didn't forget to ask where they came from. He made use of language not easily printable, but I distinctly remember the words, "Where there's three in a family they're all fools. The father's a fool, and the mother's a fool, and the child is bound to be a fool." He'd have given anybody six months if they'd gone near that covert on a non-hunting day! Then there was Mr. Joe Cradock, of Cricklade, a real good hunting sort, and dozens of others, many of whose names I have forgotten, though I can remember their horses as well as if it was yesterday.

I became first whipper-in to the Vale of White Horse after one season as second, and Will Wells (now huntsman of the Hertfordshire) succeeded me as second whip. Wells was a very nice fellow, and we were great pals. He will remember his first mount, "Yellow Dwarf," at the Vale of White Horse until his dying day, for if I remember rightly he had to borrow some new hunting kit, was bucked off in his smart clothes at the meet, and stabbed or lamed his

horse during the run, rather an unfortunate start for him there! H. Briggs was second horseman to Sir William Throckmorton, and a capital good fellow, too. I am glad to hear that he has prospered, and is now a horse dealer near Leyton-Buzzard, not only in a large, but also lucrative business, and still takes his own part in the hunting field.

A little story about Jochem, the butcher of Cirencester, occurs to me, and it is one that I have often told when jogging home after hunting. One Saturday when returning after a hard day's sport, old "Nimrod," who always was a hungry customer at the Vale of White Horse Kennels, took a piece of beef off old Jochem's slab weighing about six pounds. I saw him with it when he got on to the footpath close by, and watched him carry it into the park, when he laid it down on the grass. After we got the hounds kenneled I went and picked it up. Next morning Jochem came to the kennels, and said one of our hounds had taken a piece of beef off his slab, which Worrall strictly denied, as did the first whip also. I was never questioned, nor asked about it, though at the same time it was roasting in my oven, to repay me for the time and trouble I had spent with one of old Jochem's horses which fell over a wall into the road, a six foot drop, and which my future wife and I, who were walking out at the time (it was before we were married), had to lead for over a mile with our pocket handkerchiefs tied together for a bridle, from Jochem's field to his house. We couldn't put the horse back into the field, as the double doors were locked, and when we handed over the horse to him the old beggar never said a word of thanks in any shape or form whatever. We didn't forget it in a hurry, and that is how I got quits with Jochem, the butcher of Cirencester. Many a good laugh had I over this before leaving the country, but never "let out" about it.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Though fast fox and hounds, there were men by my troth,
Whose ambition it was to go faster than both."

IN 1873 I left the Vale of White Horse, and went to the Empress of Austria's Hunt at Buda-Pesth in Austro-Hungary. Jack Carter got me the berth as first whipper-in, he being the huntsman there, and I went out with him. The country was a good, wild hunting country, full of foxes, but not a sporting country. A good scenting country generally, but without any obstacles to jump, consequently hounds were much over-ridden. Sometimes there were as many as fifteen foxes in a covert, generally a bog or reed bed. We didn't holloa foxes away in that country, where they were so numerous, but let hounds hunt their own fox, keeping the pack, of course, as much together as possible. There were capital fields as a rule out—200 to 300 horsemen in scarlet when the Emperor and Empress were out, and several ladies. The Emperor was not a good horseman over a country, but the Empress, poor thing—such a beautiful tall figure—everyone knows what she could do on a horse! I shall never forget her to my dying day, and wish I could have a shot at the cove who assassinated her. I wouldn't miss him! In Hungary it was my misfortune to contract the acclimatizing fever—something like the ague, and I was compelled to go to the hospital at Buda-Pesth, where I

remained for six weeks. After my coming out there happened to be a meet at "Kapisher Myger," at which the Emperor and Empress were present with full *suite*, and about 250 mounted horsemen and ladies. After the meet was over and hounds were going to covert, Her Majesty came up to me (I was on foot and wrapped up in blanket clothing), and cordially shook hands with me, and turned round to the good old lady, Mrs. Lowe, wife of Mr. Lowe, the famous trainer, whom everybody in Austria and Prussia knew, and asked her to be a mother to me, to take care of me and nurse me round, which she did, poor old soul, with the very greatest of care. Mrs. Lowe was a Worcestershire person, and had her house broken up through war on the Continent three times. When I was on the sick list I used to sit with her a good deal, and she often cried over her misfortunes, at her rooms and house being broken up. I only remained one season in Hungary, the doctors considering it dangerous for me to remain any longer there. We had excellent sport and capital runs from reed beds, etc., but there were no fences, perhaps an open drain occasionally, and a bit of timber with luck. There were no natural fences and all you wanted was a horse that could gallop a bit. The hounds, some thirty-five couple, we took out with us. They stood from twenty-two to twenty-four and a half inches, and were chiefly Lord Portsmouth's and Lord Poltimore's blood.

Jack Carter was one of the quickest huntsmen I ever saw; he was on the brush of a fox in a twinkling, and that is where they are killed; the start is of as much consequence as the scent, and you can do nothing without it. Jack was half-brother to old George Carter of the Fitzwilliam, and was the eldest of the second family.

The uniform of the Royal Hunt was a scarlet coat and collar with gold braiding, white breeches and brown tops, caps as in England, with a button and gold fringe; the master, huntsman, and first whipper-in (myself) all carried horns; the ladies' costume was as in our own country, but, as a rule, there was not many ladies hunting. Her Majesty hunted regularly; she had a mare that I rode at Brocklesby as a four-year-old, just out of the breaker's hands. Seeing the mare, I said to one of the outriders that "I rode a mare in Lincolnshire very like that"; he said "very likely, for Mr. Schavel bought her for the Empress, from, I believe, the Earl of Yarborough." A very good mare, a brown, sixteen hands high; funnily I can't think of her name, but I worshipped the mare when I rode her. The outrider told Her Majesty what I had said, and she spoke to me about it. Both the Emperor and Empress rode their own line, and appeared to thoroughly enjoy the sport.* She took the greatest interest in everything, both in the kennel and out of it. Never shall I forget the first day that I saw her; she came down to look at the hounds, which were in a yard covered with sand. Carter was from home, and it had been a rainy, drizzling morning. I drew out the hounds for her alphabetically. When I had nearly drawn them all, she wished to see the lot together, and carrying as she did a pocket full of biscuits for her dumb pets, they naturally

* Her Majesty the late Empress of Austria hunted in Ireland from Summerhill in February, 1880, when it was admitted that her style of "going" over a country could not be excelled. She possessed in a rare degree all the combinations needful for the purpose—hands, nerve, seat, and judgment. In 1881 she hunted in Cheshire, and the special correspondent of the *Field* newspaper wrote of Her Majesty:—"Sitting square and straight in the saddle, with hands well down, her marvellously fitting habit is shown to full advantage. Gifted with a lightness of hand worthy of Chifney, she is as much at home in a saddle as on a throne, and on horseback forms a picture that surpasses anything ever seen in this country."

jumped up at her, and quickly she was nearly smothered with sand. It was with difficulty that I could keep them off her, and so began to use my whip pretty freely, when she said, in far more perfect English than I could ever make use of, "John, never mind me, they won't hurt me; I rather like it!" and she did get a proper smothering when I gave up trying to stop them. If ever there was a noble lady there was one; every morning she asked us all how we were, acknowledging us all—right through the lot of us. She didn't like to see hounds thrashed at all; in fact, she hated it, and would'nt have it. I had a fox terrier* of good, old-fashioned breed, which I took out with me, and with which we used to bolt no end of foxes. One day he misbehaved himself, and collared a hound by the throat, and I unwittingly before Her Majesty caught him three or four times with a whip such a clipper that I knocked him over. She saw it, and I heard her say to Carter, "I would rather have borne the blow myself than seen the good little dog get it." She was "Oh dearing" all the time whilst Carter was explaining why I corrected the little dog. Then she turned away, with the words "Oh dear, poor little fellow," and never came to look at the horses at "Kapisher Myger," her hunting box, without asking for little Chester. This was Chester I., for curiously enough I had another little terrier called Chester, which I will call Chester II., when at Rushyford in the South Durham country. Either of the Chesters would go through fire or water after a fox, and Chester II.

* This terrier was given to Bevans by Will Wells, who was second whipper-in to the Vale of White Horse in 1872. In 1878 he went as first whip to the Belvoir, remaining there until 1882, when he left to act as huntsman to the Puckeridge. In 1885 he was huntsman to Mr. Gosling's hounds, afterwards called the Herts and Essex; and in 1893 became huntsman to the Hertfordshire, and has remained with them ever since, being, I hear, greatly esteemed by everyone for his many good qualities. I well remember Wells' beautiful seat on a horse, when he whipped-in to Frank Gillard with the Belvoir.

was always first out of covert if it was blank. He hunted three days a week, and helped to draw every covert. One day at Coldsides covert, near Rushyford, in the South Durham country, he found us a brace of foxes after hounds had drawn the covert blank, and come out. Old Chester stayed behind, and we missed him; when just at that moment he gave tongue at the Rushy side of the covert, and out came a brace. Before leaving the Buda-Pesth country I may say that, perhaps, the most noted covert was one about thirteen miles from the kennels called "Karrishder." We did not speak the native language particularly well, and were content to call it "carriage door." It always held a lot of foxes, and was in the best country, and in a part where the population was very scanty, so we generally had grand sport there, though, unfortunately, mostly on the flat. There was other sport besides fox-hunting out there, and Carter used to take me out shooting with him in search of partridges, hares, wild duck, etc., right up the Danube from New Pesth to Weitsin, a five mile stretch along the river side. Often we went out duck-shooting on a moonlight night. I left Austro-Hungary in 1874, as I well remember the great Vienna Exhibition of 1873 was held out there when I was over. I went to it twice, the first time with Mr. and Mrs. Lowe and party. Whilst in the train, travelling to Vienna, Mrs. Lowe said that she would give something for a bottle of Bass' pale ale. I said, "Wait until we get to Vienna, and then we will all have one!" There were nine of us in the company, and as I ordered the beer I said, "I will stand the lot!" But we might as well have had champagne instead of beer, as it cost me 2s. 5d. a bottle, and we could have had champagne for 2s. 6d. They did have a jolly good laugh at me, especially Carter and Mrs. Lowe, because

they knew all about it. I was invalided home from Austria, as the doctors said that I could not stand the climate, and crossed from Rotterdam on March 12th, 1874, the only day on which the Brocklesby hounds were stopped hunting all that season. It *was* rough, and I *was* ill!

My destination was of course home to Brocklesby, where William Claxon—who had been in treaty with Mr. John Harvey, master of the South Durham hounds, for the place of huntsman—chanced to come with some bitches about that time, and being in want of a first whipper-in for the South Durham sent for me, and asked me if I would go there with him, as we 'd been together before at Brocklesby. The chance of going to the York and Ainsty, as second whip, had been offered me, but I wanted to do better, and after communicating with Mr. Harvey (through Claxon), engaged to come to the South Durham as first whipper-in.*

Accordingly, in May, 1874, I came to Sedgefield, and went to the kennels in Hardwick Park, arriving about four p.m., and Claxon came about eight the same evening. We put up at the Hardwick Arms, then kept by John McMorrin,† for the first night or two, as Tommy Dowdeswell, the late huntsman, hadn't got all his furniture away from the kennels. Next morning, early, we went down to the kennels to examine and carefully look over the hounds, and found them a very rough lot, and the kennels in a dirty, untidy state.

* Claxon was very strongly recommended by "Bob" Worrall to take Bevans as first whipper-in for Mr. Harvey.

† Mr. John McMorrin has now the "Town Farm," Sedgefield. One day in Mr. Harvey's time, when John kept the Hardwick Arms, Lord Castlereagh (now Marquis of Londonderry) came in after hunting soaked to the skin, and was advised to borrow a change of clothes. John lent him his best Sunday suit, just arrived from the tailors, and when it was returned to him found a sovereign in the waistcoat pocket, no doubt purposely placed there. He was naturally overjoyed, and anxious to lend "his coverts" again, but, as he humorously says, "Ever since then they have been drawn blank"!

The hounds were "all sizes, all colours, all ages, and in all diseases!" About forty couple of them. After we had made an inspection, Mr. John Harvey (the master) came down, and we had a few days' shooting amongst them, and thinned them out well. A great many had mange, and I used to bleed and dress a couple of them with a view to cure, but they never got right over it. After we had been there about six weeks we took them out for horse exercise, and after a turn round about came through the village of Sedgefield, where old "Nimrod," who resembled in many respects besides name the hound that stole the ribs of beef from old Jochem's slab at Cirencester, and had a character for visiting any house of which he saw the door open, bolted into one; I waited for him coming out, which he soon did, and sent him flying over the street; at the same time, about five couple bolted off in all directions, so we packed up what we had left as carefully as we could, and went off home. At the kennels we coupled together all we could, and then took them out again by way of breaking them in a bit, they were so wild. After coupling freely for a time we got them more sociable and broken in, and by time and patience soon had them much handier, but it was a rare job. At first some of them would fly at you if you showed them a pair of couples, and the kennelman told us that he could not couple several of them at all, but by perseverance we managed to get the best of them. I must say that I thought I had got into a queer place at first, but after putting more down, and getting a good quantity of drafts, we got into some sort of shape for cub-hunting. Mr. John Parrington was then agent for Lord Boyne at Brancepeth, and gave permission for the hounds to be taken there amongst the deer and hares. I shall never forget the first day amongst the

game at Brancepeth. It was unbearably hot, and as I was riding a very handy little mare, stripped off my coat and hung it on a tree. Mr. Parrington and Sharpe (the head keeper) came to help us, if necessary, and I overheard Mr. Parrington say to Sharpe, "There doesn't seem to be much for us to do!" After we'd given them a quiet turn round the park, holding them up well, we gave hounds their heads a little; some wanted to have a "go" after the deer, or hares, or anything on foot, and would have one; others hung back, being shy, but I managed to keep them pretty well in my hands, until I got a rare spill through my little mare putting a foot into a rabbit hole, and sending me flying several yards, as I was galloping back at full speed with some hounds which I had just managed to stop. Well, we commenced cub-hunting fairly early, and, considering all the conditions, had a very good season amongst the cubs; for we were nicely mounted and soon got to know the country. Mr. Harvey used to stay at the Hardwick Arms over-night, and was always remarkably keen and punctual; he was a thorough hunting man, rather than an all-round sportsman, for I verily believe that he hated the sight of a game-keeper or a gun, unless there were plenty of foxes astir, when he would tip "Mr. Velveteens" freely. Many a time I have heard him remark, when he saw a keeper at the meet with a gun in his hand, "it doesn't look very favourable for foxes!" "John," he always called me John, "it looks bad, I don't like the gun, it wouldn't matter so much if he hadn't the gun with him!" Mr. Harvey was a wonderful man in many ways, and must have had a constitution made of some stuff far harder than iron. He loved to talk of his early experiences in the country, in the time of the celebrated Mr. Ralph Lambton, and was never tired of relating the history

of his first day in the Sedgefield country in the year 1829, when the hounds met at Blakiston, near Wynyard. "After drawing several coverts blank," to use his own words, which I know by heart, "we were holloaed to a fox as we were going to Sutton's old whin, crossed the Tees, and killed our fox near Great Ayton, with Rosebery Topping frowning above us." Mr. Harvey rode his hunter back to Sedgefield, over twenty miles, dined there, and then mounted his hack and rode back to Newcastle, twenty-five miles further on; he always estimated that he rode between eighty and ninety miles that day, exclusive of the distance from covert to covert whilst drawing; but during the early part of his career this would not be an excessive distance, for before the days of railways, he used to hack from Newcastle to Sedgefield and back three days a week, and would then mount his hunter and proceed to the meet, so that his average daily ride, when hunting, would be about sixty miles to and from the meets alone, as I have often heard him say that it was only during the later period of his mastership that he came to Sedgefield over-night, and almost to the very last he would have a chop for dinner at the Hardwick Arms, and ride home after a day's hunting. Mr. Harvey had a painting of the little chestnut mare he rode in that, his first and perhaps most memorable, run from the Sedgefield country. He once showed it to me in his house at Leazes Terrace, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and the tears ran down the cheeks of the poor old gentleman, then upwards of eighty years of age, as he pointed out to me the good points of his first little hunter, apparently, to judge from the picture, about 14.3 h.h.

He was the kindest of masters, and would have given anything in the world to any one fond of foxes and fox-

hunting, but woe betide those who preferred a gun or velvet coat! Was always cheerful, though, especially in his later days, he frequently complained of lumbago pains in his back in the morning, particularly when sport was dragging, but when we found a fox and had a bit of a gallop the excitement and fun seemed to cure him, and he always declared that it did him more good than all the doctors in Newcastle. Mr. Harvey's stud generally consisted of five good, lightweight blood animals, fast and clever as cats. They did not require to be very strong, as he only rode about nine stones all told. Was always wonderfully keen, and riding with judgment very seldom had a fall. Though brought up and living most of his life in a town (Newcastle-on-Tyne) he was hearty and free with all the farmers in the South Durham country, and they respected him to a man; indeed, he was popular with every one, for he never passed through a level-crossing gate without throwing the gate-keeper a shilling, and many a time pulled out a packet of Harvey and Davy's "hand spun brown twist" if he recognised anyone who did ever so little for fox-hunting, and was fond of a bit of "baccy."

CHAPTER IX.

"The busy news, the sportive tongue;
The laugh that makes us still feel young."

IN the year 1874, when I came into the South Durham country to succeed Philip Tocock as first whipper-in, Mr. W. H. Wood, of West Hetton Lodge, and now of Coxhoe Hall (father of Mr. John Wood, who, I believe, hunts at times with the South Durham) was covert and poultry fund secretary, and Mr. Henry Fawcus (whose unfortunate death has not been long recorded) was field secretary. Mr. Wood was hardly what I call a light weight, but very keen, and knocked along on a good chesnut horse that carried him safely for several seasons, and few people enjoyed the sport more than he did. He was a most genial gentleman amongst the farmers, was full of wit and humour, and could tell any amount of good stories, relating particularly to coal-pit anecdotes, and could tell them well in the "pit" dialect, which I never could speak myself; in fact, whenever we got into a pit neighbourhood there appeared to be only one word which the boys made use of.

I wonder if Mr. Wood remembers a certain fence out of the plantation near "Five Houses." We got into the covert, and he says to me, "Where can we get out, Jack?" I

said, "There's a capital 'bolt' hole at the corner," and popped through a hole in the fence underneath the boughs which were thick overhead. He followed and being a big man on a big horse, which jumped rather too high over some laid thorns, was caught round the waist by the branches, and the horse seemed to jump from under him. and he was left on the ground. I thought of this two years later when I was popping over or through the same fence after a hound which was running riot, and was caught in the same way by a big rose briar, which dragged me off curiously enough just the same way, and left me swinging in the air for a second or two.

Mr. Henry Fawcus, the field secretary, was fond of all sports, and a good fox preserver at Cole Hill, where he took the shooting for the sake of the foxes. We never drew the Cole Hill coverts blank during the three or four years whilst he had the shooting there. In the season 1874-5 (my first with the South Durham) there was a very noted fox at Cole Hill, that gave us many a hard day's work and good gallop round to Close Wood, and then, as a rule, bearing to his right by Redgap, over the Sunderland road on to Brierton and Dalton crag. Sometimes he would take a bigger circle than at others, but that was his usual route. He was a very "kittle" fox, and always away in a second, and I used to trot on to the top of the hill to command a good view of him if possible, and generally saw him going over the grass bottom just as I arrived on the hill top. He was a very big, grey fox, with a beautiful brush and large white tag, and must have been five or six years old. We were often in that country in those days, and had many a good run with this "Cole Hill fox." We never killed him, but about Christmas time, 1875, the fox,

which I knew again at once, was sent to the kennels, having been picked up dead. We examined him carefully, but could not trace the cause of death, though he appeared to be healthy, and had a wonderfully fine mouth. The tusks were forwarded to Mr. Fawcus, and, I believe, that he laid great store by them. That was the best all round fox for sport that I ever saw, and you could rely upon him for a run of an hour or more if there was any scent. I read in some sporting newspaper the other day that every fox in the United Kingdom was worth £400; at least that was the amount of money expended upon him in one way or another. I hope it is true, but if any ordinary fox is worth £400 this old chap was worth half-a-million!

We once, in 1875 (I forget the date, but think that it was early in the season 1875-6)* had nearly four hours after him, and it always seemed to be his line. I believe that we met at Wolviston that day, with a good field out, and hounds fairly ran us to a standstill. The first run was twenty-five minutes from Noddings whin, a good ring round by Wynyard to ground in Wolviston rookery, just in front of hounds. Me and Mr. Fawcus stopped back to see if there was any chance of getting him out, but after five minutes' digging we found that it was fruitless, so left him. On going from Wolviston, along the Sunderland road, Mr. Fawcus' horse trod on a loose stone, and came down and broke his knees badly, and so Mr. Fawcus went back to Sedgefield, not having

* This run took place on November 1st, 1875. Hounds were stopped at 4-50 p.m. after running for three-and-a-half hours without a check. The Wilson mentioned was Mr. William Wilson, brother-in-law of Mr. John Beach, who had given him a mount on his show horse "Jimmy," for which he had given £200. "Jimmy" was a fine hunter as well as a show horse, but went wrong in his feet soon after this. He was six years old at the time, and Mr. Wilson got him for an "old song" from Mr. Beach, hunted him sound, and sold him to a North Durham gentleman, whom he carried well for two or three seasons, eventually dropping down dead on the high road, the result of heart disease.

a second horse at hand. I was riding a bay horse called "Hazard" (a roarer it is true, but an extraordinary good one), when I spied fox and hounds coming out of Close wood, with no horsemen near, and joined in with them, and rode through the remainder of the run until Claxon, the huntsman, at Dalton Piercy, the last time round, changed horses with me, both his being "cooked to a turn"; the hounds were still running hard, and Charley Hawks, the second whipper-in, who was going home with one of Claxon's horses, had the good sense to stop them when going into Close wood for the second time, no one then being in sight of them. Claxon, Mr. Richard Walker, and Will Wilson of Hartlepool, a big, bold man who hadn't been doing much in the morning, were the only horsemen with them when I came across Claxon, and they had all had enough of it. Mr. Richard Walker of Owton was on his old favourite flea-bitten grey mare, and said he must wish me "good afternoon," as the old mare was pulling up into a walk; then Wilson collared me, and dashed ahead for one field, when the pace knocked the steam out of him likewise. Running round between Brierton and Dalton, we fell in with Mr. Harvey, Mr. C. W. C. Henderson, Mr. Richard Forster, and one or two more; at this point I gave my horse to Claxon, and ran on foot to the Red Lion Inn to get some gruel for the horses, all of which were dead beat and greatly in want of it. We jogged quietly home to Sedgefield. The horse I rode throughout the day, and carried Claxon near the finish, didn't carry much flesh, and I heard the remark passed round at the meet that I ought to carry *him;* to which I made answer, by way of saying that neither of us were very heavy, and we might "spell it," that is, each take a turn, but that at

any rate when *we* were tired, it would be time for everyone else to go home, and there was a good laugh about it.

Mr. Fawcus, who went home in the morning when his horse fell on the road, was delighted to hear of our good run after his old favourite fox, and I wish we had killed him, for he, Mr. Fawcus, always gave Claxon, me, and the second whip a good tip whenever we killed a fox. We did not know for a long time why he was always so anxious for hounds to get blood, but it appeared that he had made a bet of £50 with some sportsman of the Hurworth Hunt that the South Durham hounds would kill more foxes in the season than the Hurworth. I forget what the bag was, but Mr. Fawcus won easily at the finish. We ran a fox to ground pretty late in the season 1875-6, in a short drain from which he could be easily bolted; so in went the terrier at one end and I went to the other to catch him with my whip thong as he came out. There was a gentleman on horseback standing near who was firmly of the opinion that the fox had gone straight through and on, but I could wind him plainly. "Jack," he said, "he 's not there," and almost in the same breath said, "yes, he is, I can hear them." "Yes," I said, "the kissing 's begun," and out he came at that moment, and was caught as he passed me. Mr. Harvey told me to give him plenty of law, and I let him get a field start, but they killed him before he had gone very far. He never looked like getting away from them. I had whispered something into his ear!

I mentioned Mr. Charles Henderson, whose father was sole master of the Durham County hounds, I believe in the season 1861-2, and joint master with Mr. John Harvey, when the country was divided into North and South Durham in 1872; in fact, they were joint masters, I am told, from

1866 to 1872, when Mr. J. Henderson retired. Mr. Charles was keen beyond words, and kept his horses at Sedgefield, in the neighbourhood of which he was a great favourite with all the farmers and sporting fraternity. He was a very good straight and forward rider, with some capital weight-carrying hunters, if anything too small in number. Mention of his name reminds me of a story which Mr. Harvey often laughed over with him. When we were coming home from hunting through Sedgefield the village boys always cried out, "How many have you killed?" One day when we'd done nothing, and I felt very hungry, as I always did after a bad day, I said for fun, "*A brace*," and the boys ran round me to look for the masks, and said, "Thou's a lee-ar, Jack! Where's the head?" Mr. Henderson was riding alongside me at the time, and said "that's just what the young beggars called me last year, when we killed very few foxes, and I gave them the same answer as you did!" Unfortunately, Mr. Charles Henderson did not hunt many seasons in the country he loved so well after I came into it, but came occasionally as long as Mr. Harvey's mastership lasted, and was always the same, apparently enjoying himself and trying to assist others in doing the same. I wonder if he remembers that fall he got January 15th, 1875, when we met at Two Mile houses. There is a good story of how Mr. Harvey and Mr. Henderson stopped a stranger from cracking his whip at all times when he came out. Mr. Charles Henderson rode alongside him one day, and kept cracking his whip loudly for some time. At last up comes Mr. Harvey in a terrible fuss calling him (Mr. Charles) everything, and saying, "I've got four men paid to do that; what the devil are you doing?" I never heard the old gentleman so "nasty" and yet he was only pretending, but that cove

never cracked a whip again when he came out with us. "It was a very good and fair plant."

It was during the cub-hunting season of 1874, that one night when we were sitting in the Black Lion, Sedgefield, Mr. Tom Hopps of Stillington (who still farms there), was telling the company present that Mr. Cradock's hounds had killed three cubs in three mornings. Says I, "That 's nothing, we can kill more than that!" Mr. Hopps took me up at once, and bet me a new hat and five shillings that we wouldn't kill that number in the next three days' cub-hunting. Well, we had no kills the first two days, and on the last day I was getting desperate; we had met at Foxton and as I was trotting along on Stillington moors, I noticed an old scrub-bush all scratched round, so had a careful look at it, when I observed an old fox caught in a "hang." I gets off and takes him out. We 'd been hunting about six weeks, and hounds were just getting to know my voice; I holloaed twice, sharp, and a few couples came straight to me, and we worried him in a bit of long grass. Up comes Mr. Harvey, that pleased that we 'd got a kill, and Claxon goes through the ceremony of throwing him up, but hounds wouldn't eat him! Claxon said it was a curious thing as the fox was quite clean, and I chimed in, "they *will* do it sometimes, even when they 're very hungry." At that moment another fox was holloaed away, and I just hung the remains on a bush, when I spotted a hare in another "hang." There was nothing but "hangs" all over Stillington moors then. I hides that hare, thinking he might come in useful again, and put him into my pocket on my way home; we didn't kill another fox or cub, they being not at all numerous just then, and I lost my bet and so went to Mr. Fletcher's and bought Mr. Hopps a new hat! I have never "let on"

this story except to a very few, and don't believe that any of the gentlemen who were out hunting know the real truth to this day.* A hard riding man, though he had seen his best day when I came into the country, was Mr. R. S. Johnson of Sherburn Hall, better known amongst all hunting men and indeed everywhere as "Dicky" Johnson; a stout heavy man, weighing, or at any rate riding, over eighteen stones. In spite of his weight he knocked along on good weight carrying hunters, and had been a real bruiser in his day. I used to hear gentlemen say that he once had a "pounding match" with one of the hardest men in the Shires, each giving the other a lead in turn over the stiffest place he could find, until Mr. Johnson said he was getting tired of it, and would have it finished off one way or the other, so charged a very stiff, high wall, with a seven feet drop on the landing side, and got over safely; but he and his horse both gave such a terrible groan when they landed that his mate wouldn't have it at any price, and chucked up the sponge! And from what I saw of Mr. Johnson, I can quite believe it.

Once when Mr. R. S. Johnson was out we ran from Humbleknowle to Carr side, crossing Fishburn beck, where the welter weight had dismounted, and he and his second horseman were leading over. I was riding a grey horse called "Lightning," that Tommy Dowdeswell (the huntsman previous to Claxon) used to ride; of course, I was going at it as hard as the horse could gallop; he looked up, and not having seen me before asked his man, "If that was

* It is a remarkable coincidence that whilst John Bevans was relating to me this story, Mr. Hopps himself drove up to my house on a subject of covert repairs, that being the only occasion on which he had ever called on me, and he corroborated what Bevans had said in every particular, remembering it most vividly. This was Wednesday, September 9th, 1874. Claxon knew all about it, as his diary shews.

the new huntsman?" He said, "No, it's the first whip." I flew over, and heard him muttering something in the way of Parliamentary language, which his second horseman passed on to me. He was wishing to —— he was my weight; "he wouldn't be leading over then!" No more he would, for at one time no doubt nothing would or could have stopped him.* Two or three seasons later we were running by White Hurworth, and hounds were going nicely. He was enjoying his favourite singing and whistling as he did when hounds ran, very nearly doing both, when we came to a drop fence, at which he unfortunately over-balanced himself, and went over his horse's head, his mount pecking a bit. I shall never forget it to the longest day I live; he fell with such a "whop!" It clean knocked all the wind out of him. I caught his horse, and found him sitting on the bank, pumping wind. It was impossible not to help laughing, and I did laugh. He says, "I'll soon be all right; give me my horse, and go on, Jack; I'll soon catch you," but we ran straight to Castle Eden Dene, and he did not put in an appearance again that day! I believe that Mr. Johnson hunted from Cheltenham for two seasons, with the Cotswold, when the country was first divided; the best horse he had in my time was called "The Major," a real nailer, and a brown. Generally, he had four horses standing at Sedgefield, and there was no better supporter of fox-

* Mr. T. B. Briggs has kindly given me an account of the most appalling looking place he ever saw the adventurous "Dickey" Johnson tackle. "It was a wicket gate four feet high on the top of four stone steps of exactly the same height, and there appeared to be no other possible outlet at that end of the field. Johnson was not the man to make his exit from a field by the way he had come in, so took his horse back a bit, and charged the gate for all he was worth. His chance appeared to lie in breasting it, and carrying it away, but it was narrow, and he took gate and both posts away with him, and carried them into the field, escaping, as was his wont, without a fall or even damage to his horse. It was all I could do to surmount the minor obstacle which remained.

hunting when he had the "spending brass." One day, Mr. Johnson jumped into a cabbage garden near Sedgefield, sending the pickling cabbages flying in every direction, and out again on to the road and over it. Instead of a volley of oaths, we heard the astonished gardener exclaim, "Oh, he's a terrible man to loap the dykes, is Dickey Johnson!" He once jumped a fence and knocked down an old man, who died next day of heart disease and fright combined. Someone tried to stop him riding over his fences a few days after, when he said, "My friend, get out of the way, or I'll serve you the same way as I did that man the other day." Another day, some stranger jumped upon Mr. Henderson, who was a great favourite with him (Mr. Johnson), so he went straight for the stranger and said, "My friend, if you jump on that man any more I'll jump upon you, and see how you like the feet of a big horse and twenty stone on the top of you." There was another Mr. Johnson hunting at this time with the South Durham, namely, Mr. Cuthbert G. Johnson of Hardwick Hall. He always kept foxes, and was a keen hunting man and shooter, too. He went fairly well and saw a lot of sport. I might call him an all-round man, for he was a sculler or rowing man, and could use the gloves a bit, too. Mrs. Johnson was a fine horsewoman and very fond of fox-hunting.

The mention of Mr. Cuthbert Johnson's name brings to my mind a splendid run, and perhaps the hardest day with hounds that Claxon and I had seen during the two seasons, or season and a half to be correct, we had been with the South Durham. Having been stopped owing to frost for some time now, Mr. Harvey gave us the privilege of a by-day, on a Saturday, towards the end of January, 1875; I believe that it was the 30th January, but my hunting diaries

are not so accurate as they were before a great many pages were torn out, or destroyed, long ago, as my wife used to give them to the children to play with when they were "brats," and they made use of them as targets for anything handy. We met at Old-acres, and found a brace or a leash of foxes in Old-acres plantation; five or six couple of hounds went to the right for Butterwick, and then into Wynyard, where they pressed their fox so much that he ran against some wire and was killed; the body of the hounds getting well away with a good game and bold fox, led us a merry dance to Bog Hall, through it and away, pointing for Whitton by Lea Close, through Woogrey plantation, and over the Little Stainton country, leaving Fox Hill on the right; then made a turn to the left, and crossed the road between Bishopton village and Woogrey, leaving Lea Close on the left, and running right up to Elstob, where we undoubtedly changed foxes; Claxon maintaining that the run fox had laid down in the covert. No doubt he was right, but there was so much "hollering" all round, especially on the part of Mr. W. Stephenson, who thought that he had viewed the hunted fox, that hounds got their heads up and went away for Carlton, where Claxon stopped them near the Iron Works, and not far from the earths, at about half-past three, or barely so late, though it was getting darkish at the time. We found the first foxes a few minutes after 11 o'clock, meeting at 10-45, and left the last say at 3-20, running hard all the time; a terribly severe day for horses and hounds. At the finish, only Claxon, Mr. and Mrs. Cuthbert Johnson, and myself, were left with hounds, the majority of the "field" dropping out during the early part of the run, in fact mostly before we reached Fox Hill, as the country rode awfully deep; the best part of the run

occupied about two hours and ten minutes, but we were running over four hours altogether, with nothing to speak of in the way of a check. My little thoroughbred mare, a chestnut purchased by Mr. Harvey in London, carried me wonderfully from beginning to end, and was comparatively fresh at the finish; I think she was called "Hippona," or something of the sort. Claxon rode "Heroine" and "Henrietta," and was always close to hounds; in fact we stuck to them from beginning to end, but the remainder of the "field" were reduced to the roads. It was the little mare's breeding and my light weight that served my mount so well, as I never spared her, and she was as game as a bantam cock! When we reached home in the darkness, some of the six couple from Wynyard had arrived, and we heard from Mr. Flavell (then of Sedgefield), who came up with the mask and brush, that they had killed after bustling up their fox in Old-acres plantations and Layton Lings for fifty minutes; this was *one* of the best scenting days I ever saw, as hounds drove over the fallows just as well as on grass, and ran on all sorts of ground. "Over Newbeggin bottoms, like pigeons, they really flew," as the old song—written, I believe, by Squire Sutton's father—that Joe Rutter† of Hangthorn used to sing at the earth-stoppers' dinner every year, tells so well. A good sporting farmer was old Joe Rutter, and a rare good puppy-walker, who knew how to bring up the young 'uns; he used to say that he allowed his puppies so much meat and milk, and they had to find themselves in eggs!—for everything else they were on board wages! His receipt was an excellent one, for he generally managed to run into a place at the Puppy Show, and walked such good hounds as "Lincoln" and "Banker." "Lincoln" was a

† Died in 1903.

sturdy hound, a gross, hard feeder, and a son of the "Brocklesby Ranger" and brother to "Landlord," also a nailer; poor fellow, he lost an eye in the east country; we missed him one day in the neighbourhood of Greatham, and he came back next day with one eye blinded, and we always thought that some ill-disposed person had thrown some liquid of a burning nature at him; but he might have done it accidentally, amongst some chemicals.

Some of Joe Rutter's songs, it may be added, were a trifle rough, and wouldn't stand much investigation, but were very appropriate for the gathering of earth-stoppers, who liked something lively. Joe always introduced the puppy he walked into his songs and musical verses, and, indeed, he did a bit of composing on his own—the deeds of "Lincoln," whelped in 1882, and "Banker," 1883, being his favourite topic. He always maintained that if he had a good fox-hound puppy he never lost any poultry by foxes, whilst he kept the foxes in good condition. When still a puppy "Banker" by "Fairplay," out of "Blameless," always joined in the chase with us when passing Hangthorn, and went on with us until we gave up for the day, when he used to hark back home as fast as he could go to introduce the news to his master Joe. Another wonderful puppy was "Druid" by "Artist," out of "Dagmar." "Artist" was a son of the Brocklesby "Ambrose." "Druid" was walked at Bishopton by Mr. John Gent, one of the old sort, and a rare good puppy walker. I found an account of the puppy's doings in an old diary, and think it is taken from a local newspaper.

Exploits of a Foxhound Puppy.—On Friday last, when the South Durham Hounds met at Bishopton,* a puppy "at

* This happened on January 23rd, 1883, and the splendid day's sport is referred to in Chapter IV.

walk" in the village, "Druid" by name, surveyed the gay scene at a respectful distance; when the cavalcade moved off to Foxy Hill, taking some rough fields by the way, "Druid," though very fat, followed in their wake at a brisk canter, though still at a respectful distance. He was present at the find at Foxy Hill, and though rather floored by the pace, he was seen at a considerable distance in the rear toiling away, but sticking to the line manfully. The chase lay towards Bishopton, Gilly flat, Barker's plantation, thence by Elton to Sandilees, where they killed him. Time fifty-five minutes. "Druid" came to the fore before the fox was broken up. They found their second fox at Sutton's whin, and burst him up near Two Mile Houses in twenty-seven minutes. Again "Druid" presented himself, and was back again at Bishopton before three with the pack, but went with them no further. He was only pupped in June, 1882, and is consequently only seven months old.

CHAPTER X.

"Alas! by some degree of woe,
We every bliss must gain;
The heart can ne'er a transport know
That never feels a pain."

AMONGST other gentlemen hunting with us at this time was Mr. Marshall Fowler,* who seldom missed a day, and had a very nice stud of horses. His father, who was a terror to all poachers and wrong-doers, preserved foxes well at Preston Hall, where we ran occasionally, but it is in the Hurworth country. Mr. Marshall Fowler had a wonderfully good grey horse; also a chestnut and a bay which carried him well. Later on he had some very smart hunting cobs of a grand stamp, and up to weight on short legs, which must have taken a good deal of finding. Mr. Fowler used to say that he just missed Mr. Ralph Lambton, but he was an eye-witness of the accident which befel the Marquis of Londonderry over a fence at Oxeye on the north

* Mr. Marshall Fowler had some good horses in his time; notably a black horse by "Sir Hercules," that carried him from 1867 to 1875 without a fall. Dick Christian rode this horse with the Hurworth hounds, and used to say that he never rode a better horse across country. Another good horse of his was "Pug-dog," an extraordinary water jumper, that carried his owner wonderfully well in a noteworthy run with Lord Fitzhardinge's hounds over the Severn marshes, when out of an enormous field only six horsemen saw the kill, one of whom was a "lady from Bristol on a white horse."

side of the road, when the Noble Earl, then Master of the Durham County Hounds, fell and broke his arm in 1843. I have also heard him say that he could remember seeing Mr. William Russell† (great uncle of the present master of the South Durham, I believe) call at Squire Sutton's at Elton about the same year, and indulge in a glass of brandy and water after a hard day. Those were the good old days!

The Marquis of Londonderry was master of the Hurworth hounds when I first came into the country, and consequently was not out with us much, but he occasionally came to see how we were getting on. He was always a good horseman, and a wonderfully hard man to beat over a country, being very "straight-necked." Sometimes it's a good thing, but sometimes you get dropped on if anything goes wrong; but His Lordship always rode good cattle, and seldom got down in England. One morning, when he was master of the Hurworth, probably in 1874, he came to have a bit of cub hunting with us in the Cole Hill country. Whilst drawing Sheraton plantations hounds were full of riot, and I had to put one or two of them through their facings rather severely. Amongst others, "Stately," a second season bitch, that came from the Lothians' pack, I fancy, and had a sister called "Spiteful."* "Stately" was a good bitch with a fox on foot, but failing a fox she'd have a go at anything, and was particularly fond of hares, which I was determined to break her from, kill or cure, and caught her in the small plantation at Sheraton fairly on the job, and gave her a sound, good correcting, of which the Marquis and Lord Henry Vane-Tempest were eye witnesses. Mr. Harvey

† Mr. W. Russell died in 1850.

* "Stately" and "Spiteful" (1872) were by the "Holderness Lincoln" out of the "Lothians' Sedulous."

was a very tender-hearted man, and kept saying, "That 'll do, John," but, of course, I couldn't hear him, and when it was over I heard the Marquis say to Lord Henry, "I wouldn't care to have a thrashing like that; she won't soon forget it." I then coupled her *hind* leg up to her neck, and let her go to the huntsman on three legs, helping her on the way, and also after I had mounted my horse. It did her good. I put her hind-leg up, because with a fore-leg up they can go like steam, and you often see wild pointers or setters working in the turnips or stubbles in this way for partridges. I say when you do start to correct hounds do it properly; it's no good using half measures, and continually tap, tap, tapping them, according to the modern custom. That spoils hounds, and it's just the same with anything else. When you've given them a proper dressing they take notice of you when you speak to them, but not otherwise. I found the hind-leg dodge out through a bitch called "Sophie" at the Vale of White Horse. "Sophie" was a wonderful good fox-hunter, but equally fond of hares, rabbits, or anything that ran away. She used to get a bit of tapping occasionally, which of course did no good, but once caught a rabbit and brought it to me; I tried the hind leg dodge, and did give her a "twilting" in the deer park; singularly enough, she was drafted to come to the South Durham at the time, but Mr. John Cookson of the Morpeth took a fancy to her (a black and white bitch) and got her, which wasn't a bad thing, as she was so riotous, and old Mark Robinson (the huntsman of the Morpeth) told me that they could make nothing of her.

The opening day of the regular season of 1876, at Stotfold (where Mr. Harvey always commenced the season, was a clipper, and was recorded in the *Field* newspaper, some

time in the November of that year. I have a cutting of it, and amongst those who were out, were Captain Fawcus, Hon. Sec.; Captain (now Sir Robert) Ropner, Messrs. M. Fowler, R. S. Johnson, Richard Forster, G. M. Watson, Geo. C. Whitwell, Dobson, Peirson, Perle, Beach, Smith, Jordison, Appleby, York, Fisher, Armstrong, Barker; and Mrs. Gourley and Mrs. Thompson. The first draw was Brierton whin, on the farm of that rare old sportsman and fox preserver Mr. Robert Hird, who was, unfortunately, ill at the time, and could not be present at the find; there were a brace in his covert, and we chopped one and went away with another like a shot, pointing for Dalton Crag; but he turned to his right over Low Stotfold, and ran up to Sunderland Gate and Wynyard, and was knocked off his legs between Whinny moor and Close wood, after a rattling thirty-five minutes. We found our third fox in a little spinney, near the Red Lion Inn, and drove him towards Brierton; but he was here headed by a plough-boy and turned to his right for Burntoft; headed again, he came back to Brierton covert, ran through it, and went to ground in a drain on Mr. Jordison's farm; but little "Venom," a rare, hard-bitten, little sort of a fox-terrier, soon made matters too warm for master reynard, and he was bolted and killed after another smart gallop, in Mr. Stephenson's plantation. Yet a fourth fox was viewed away by me from Throston Carr, within half-a-mile of West Hartlepool, and gave us a capital forty minutes, through Brierton covert and by Elwick wind-mill, until we were obliged to give him up, pointing for Cole Hill, through darkness coming on. Three good runs, and accounted for three foxes—not a bad day's work. The *Field* account goes in for a bit of butter, and says, "William Claxon came to us from the Bicester. All who know him,

and understand what a huntsman's duties are, say that few better huntsmen exist. Patient, quiet, painstaking as he is, and always with his hounds. Bevan, the first whip, is noted for his quick eye; no fox ever escapes his view, and no matter what sort of a country it may be, by some means or other, Bevan is always there; no place is too big, no fence is too ugly for Jack Bevan to negotiate." That's rather thick butter, but I suppose it 's meant for me. My real name is Bevans, but they always call me Jack Bevan in the South Durham country.

The same writer concludes by referring to our grand old master in the following terms.—"Our master, John Harvey, who was going in the time of Ralph Lambton, though upwards of seventy-two years, yet rides as straight and enjoys the sport as keenly as any fox-hunter living. He is a great favourite with all the farmers, always punctual to a minute, and not merely liked, but *adored* by his 'field.'" No truer words, say I, were ever written, and no man ever had a better master!

Once, in the early part of the regular hunting season of 1877,* after a meet at Coxhoe Hall, when near Fishburn, Mr. Harvey and three or four more came to a gateway, filled up with some loose thorns and a pole across, where some one had got off to pull it out. Turning round, and seeing me coming, Mr. Harvey says, "Look out, John's coming, he'll send it all flying and make a good road for us"; but the old mare (Bicester, I think) had her eye on the pole, and being a good timber jumper cleared the lot, and left things exactly as they were. They then pulled the place down and soon Mr. Harvey came up and said, in his usual quiet way, "John, I 'll have to get you a fresh mare."

* This would be November 7th, 1877. Bicester was out that day.

Thinking at first that he meant it, I said, "Oh, she'll do for me yet a bit, sir." He said, "She jumps too clean now." She used to clear the places out when I first got her, and was very handy for making roads. As a matter of fact she'd banged her legs once or twice, and came to the conclusion that it was easier to go over the top than through, as many others find with practice. This reminds me of another similar saying to me by Mr. Harvey, about the same period, though a few months earlier in the year (probably January, 1877). We had met somewhere about Newbeggin, and during a fast run of about thirty-five or forty minutes, after passing Sadberge Grange, came across some snow in a deep ditch towards us. My mount was old "Patience," a brown mare that Mr. Harvey afterwards gave to Charley Robinson of the Brakes, near Sedgefield; she was a capital fencer, a very good scrambler, if required, and went at it as though she meant getting safely over, which she did, into a plough field, where hounds were coursing their fox up a furrow, which took my attention away for the moment from Mr. Harvey. The old gentleman's heart failed him in the last stride, and he whipped his brown mare "Polly" (the mare on which his picture was painted) round, and made for the gate; to open this he dismounted and was thrown out a bit, there being only the two of us, and Claxon near hounds. After coursing their fox up the field, hounds crossed the Sadberge and Longnewton road, also the Stockton and Darlington back-road, and we killed him in an orchard close to Sadberge. In a few minutes, Mr. Harvey came up and passed the remark that "I'd served him such a trick that had never been played upon him in his life before." I thought it was something serious, and begged his pardon, and said I was very sorry indeed if

I'd done anything wrong. He said. "No, no, that is not it, but you've pounded me; my heart failed me at the last, and I dare not have it when I caught sight of the snow in the ditch; had it been fifty years ago, you wouldn't have left me there." And the tears rolled down the old gentleman's cheeks the whole of the time. He would have two pads cut off, down by the elbow, to make paper-knives of, in remembrance of the day on which he had been first pounded, after sixty years of hunting. There is no doubt that he felt it very much, and he never forgot this occasion. After he had retired from the hunting field, whenever I went to see him at Newcastle, he would always remind me of this occurrence, and seldom referred to it without tears coming to his eyes‡ —poor old gentleman. I ought to have said that Mr. Harvey was in at the death several minutes before any of the "field" arrived, showing what a gallant old sportsman, then in his seventy-second or third year,* he was to the last. This was his last season but one in the hunting-field.

During the off season of 1877, Mr. Harvey had a nasty fall in the street at Newcastle, as he was returning from his early morning's ride on the Town Moor; this shook him very much, and later on in the year, during the hunting season, he had a bad fall by Dene Bridge wood, his horse dropping short into a gutter; no bones were broken, but he got such a severe shaking that he never recovered it, and could not wear it off, and no wonder, for he was then about seventy-four years of age; I know that he was born in leap

‡ "Cold, calculating thoughts succeed,
With timid doubt and wary deed,
Back on the past he turns his eye,
Remembering with an envious sigh,
The bolder feats of youth."

* Mr. Harvey was born on February 29th, 1804 (leap year).

year, and only had a birthday once in four years, for he used to joke about this, and often said that other people were luckier than himself in this respect, and that he would be done with hunting long before he came of age.

Mr. Harvey was not what is termed a "hound man," but was very fond of his pack, and when in his prime, or, indeed later, was very bad to beat over a country, being such a fine light weight, as he could have ridden in the Derby, and in full hunting kit weighed very little, if anything, over nine stones. Amongst other things he was very humorous on the subject of school boards. I remember Mr. Charles Henderson saying to him, "Why on earth do you run the school boards and education down so much?" "Why," he said, "look at that wall! That's a specimen of what education does; it teaches the boys and girls to write and draw, and they chalk up all sorts of dirty words, sentences and figures on the wall, which they couldn't have done if they hadn't been over-educated." He was always loosing off about this, and I fancy Mr. Henderson used to draw him out on the subject when he saw any fancy writing or drawing on a wall! They had many a laugh together, and always had a joke when passing Dene Bridge Pit. Mr. Harvey used to say, "Charley, do you see that chimney there?" "Yes, confound it," he used to reply, "there are two of my best hunters in it in variegated bricks!" which always highly amused the old gentleman. They always had a "go" about this when passing by.

Mr. Harvey gave up the mastership of the South Durham in 1878, and Sir William Eden, Bart., of Windlestone, made arrangements for hunting the country. The kennels were transferred to Rushyford, where Sir William erected new ones, and Claxon and I and the hunt staff, of course, all

went to live there. Sir William had a fine stud of horses, and mounted us well, and we had some fine sport during his first mastership. Scent was not very grand during the season of 1878-9, but we had a remarkably hard day in February, 1879, after the meet at Middridge, running for three-and-a-half hours from Simpasture, past Woodham plantation, the Agnew, across the Darlington and Durham turnpike road to Coldsides, where we had a check through some sheep crossing the line; then forward to Bradbury Village through Gipsy whin, by Trundle plantation to Bishop Middleham, and pointing for Sedgefield, but turned to right past Sedgefield Station, left Morden on left, and crossed the Bradbury carrs nearly to Copelaw, passing Traveller's Rest, to within two fields of Simpasture (where we found); on he went past Woodham village, through Coldsides fox-cover, past Nunstainton, Chilton Hall, and turning back once more made past Bradbury Village, over Mrs. Burdon's farm at Coldsides, through the covert for the third time, along the Skerne banks nearly up to Isle farm, where we viewed him a field in front of hounds. Here a fresh fox jumped up, but Claxon sticking to his fox killed him handsomely in the open after three hours and a half, or upwards, during which time we covered a tremendous lot of ground, and if it had been straight it would have been an uncommon big and smart thing.

A real good day in the second year of Sir William's first mastership was on November 7th, 1879, in the east country, when we met at Wolviston; found at Nodding's whin, and after a sharp skurry, ran to ground in a few minutes; quickly found again in "Bob" Stephenson's bean field, near Brierton, and ran through Brierton whinny fields to Lax's whin; crossed the North Burn by Claxton House, and

rattled away along the north bank to Whinny moor plantations, where he beat us, after a nailing good sixty-three minutes. A very fine gallop. I remember this well, because Charley Robinson of Morden south side was very ill at the time, and said to be dying, but took a turn for the better on the following day, when the Hurworth hounds ran close past his house, and hearing the music, he said to those attending him, and almost hourly expecting his death, "lift me up to the window and let me see the hounds once again before I die." They did so, and from that moment he began to recover, and lived for years after. The Hurworth hounds had an extraordinary run that day, having met, I believe, at Elton, and run due north nearly to Rushyford, and then over the Carrs, where everyone was lost or pounded, and Mr. Ord, who had been hunting at Heighington with the Zetland hounds (which also had, I was told, two grand runs from Redworth and Wilkinson's whins, the latter of seventy-five minutes) was returning home on a tired horse, across Morden Carrs, when, in a clear frosty evening, he heard the distant music of hounds; soon, a pack of hounds came up to him, but there was no horseman in sight, nor did anyone turn up as they raced past Brunton's plantation, across Stillington moors, past Bog Hall, and pointing for Carlton Ironworks, when he was obliged to leave them, his horse being reduced to a trot. Many of the hounds were out all night, and it appears that the Hurworth "field" who started with the pack from Elton had a gruelling run, and, when most of their horses were beaten, had the misfortune to embark on the Carrs, where the bottomless stells pounded them, as they have done many on fresh horses, and they were left behind, scattered all over the country. Some of the Hunt servants, we were told, got up to the body of the

pack when it was quite dark, and Mr. James Sawrey Cookson,* who was then master of the Hurworth hounds, told me afterwards that it was between ten and eleven at night when the main body reached the kennels. This was on a Saturday, and scent was "dead-in" just now, for on the following Monday there was great sport from the Castle Eden meet. The morning was very wet, and a fox was found at Moralees whin, near Kelloe Banks, and we ran him through Wingate plantations, where he turned to his right and left Hurworth burn on the left, pointing for Whinhouse belt; that he left on the left, and turned right handed through Humbleknowle plantation, past Bridge House farm, Fishburn, and pointing for Old-acres; turned to the right through Milburn's whin, and we killed him underneath the cemetery wall at Sedgefield after running nearly two hours over a fine piece of country, and one of the best runs I ever saw in the country. There was a lot of grief, and I was one of the unfortunate ones, as I took a couple of good "bowlers," one over a blind fence with a rail in it, and the other over the boggy ditch just below Donnewell, where I remember Captains Sowerby and Malet once got down, somewhere about this time, though not on this day. This boggy ditch has been an unfortunate piece of ground for me, as I have claimed it on two or three occasions, and seen many on their backs in the rotten bottom, though, as a rule, I knew my ground pretty well; but here you must go in or over, or stop there, which wasn't exactly my style. We were having wonderful sport about this time, as we fell in with a first-rate fifty-five minutes from Five Houses, near Trimdon, on the following Monday; and on the following Wednesday, November 19th, 1879, had a memorable day from Chilton

* Mr. James Sawrey Cookson, the noted blood-stock breeder, died November 2nd, 1888.

Hall, the residence of that good sportsman, Dr. Fenwick. This day we found our fox at Trundle plantation, and ran through Gipsy whin, Denebridge wood, Windlestone home plantations, across to Middridge Lane plantation, back to Windlestone, thence to Coldsides, where he dwelt a little, but dashed forward again right through a party of horsemen and was killed in Dr. Fenwick's garden at Chilton Hall, after an hour and three quarters. Hounds rolled him over on the very spot where we had met, and I cannot remember another instance of this happening. Mrs. Fenwick was running about on foot, and, viewing the fox once or twice, was greatly excited in the hunt, and of course up at the death. Before we left, we all had a glass of the Doctor's celebrated orange brandy, which sent us home in nice spirits. I would like to say that the worthy Doctor was a real good sportsman, who had hunted a pack of harriers himself, and knew all about the business; he knew exactly what hounds were doing, which, as a rule, few of the "field" can say; he had a big bay horse that could go a bit, also a chestnut and a grey, that I can remember well, and which were generally visible when hounds ran, and on which he saw a lot of sport, as he seldom missed a day anywhere, and also put in odd days with Lord Zetland's pack. The Doctor's son, "Master Jim," was also fond of hunting; a nice, quiet rider, and enjoyed the sport on a grey or dun pony at first, until he was old enough to ride his father's horses, which he did when he was home for the holidays.

On January 2nd, 1880, we had another fine run, after meeting at Bishopton, from Lee Close; getting away on the south side and fairly racing past Bishopton, over Whitton beck to Whitton whin, where we got up to our fox; then rattled him across to Watts' moor, through Watts' planta-

tion, over the Stockton road into Layton Lings, and on to Crawford's plantation, Flat wood, Hambletonian Park, Fulthorpe Road, Bottle Hill, to Bluestone Mill, Viewley Hill and Billingham Beck, close to Norton Ironworks, where he got to ground in some old flues. Sir 'William went like a bird in this run, but I cannot remember the name of the gentleman who came with him and did not fare so well. He will have a tender feeling for Bishopton Beck, for he went plump into it, and got well mixed up with mud and water, not far from Stillington, after we'd passed the Ironworks; there were three or four more in the beck at the time, and some of them had to be dragged out, if I remember rightly, with a little help, a good deal of hard pulling, and probably swearing, too!

Shortly after this, on January 5th, 1880, we had perhaps the best run for clean find and finish, point and pace, that it was my lot to see in the country; at any rate it is a run that is spoken of by those who were in it, more often (or at least used to be) than any that I can call to mind; it is generally called the Elton to Neseless run, and was a good point of just over eight miles on the ordnance map. In the morning, we had a nice burst with a fox from Oxeye to Clement's whin (very fast), and then slow hunting back to Oxeye, the foot people heading him a lot, and killed him at Oxeye after forty-five minutes. Hounds were then put into Elton whin, and were just being drawn out when a fox jumped up on the west side of the whin, from under Lord Henry Vane Tempest's horse's feet; at once the pace was a cracker, as we got a capital start with him, and drove him past Willow Hall, Stoney Flat and Bishopton, up to Woogrey, leaving this on the left, Lea Close on the left, and Stillington on the left; over Shotton moor we fairly

raced him and killed him in the middle of a forty-acre field, close to Neseless, after as grand a fifty-three minutes as any one wants to ride to; the fox was so stiff when we ran into and killed him that Claxon set him up on his legs, and some of those who were coming up behind and saw him in the distance thought for the moment that he was still alive! Sir William had the best of the run throughout on Courtier and Magic; the latter a horse he bought at Mr. Jock Trotter's sale, and Captain Sowerby rode Joshua (so called I believe because he had no pedigree) first horse, changing on to Little Harry during the run. What a grand dun pony Little Harry was to be sure! I can't quite remember where Sir William and Captain Sowerby got their second horses, but they were very lucky to hit them off as they did. Lord Henry Vane Tempest rode bang up throughout the run, but had the bad luck to get down in jumping Shotton Beck, close to the finish; there was a bridge not twenty yards off, but Lord Henry never would go a yard out of his way for anything or anybody and down he came, but was up in a second and saw the fox rolled over. Mr. Ord on a grey horse that won a steeple-chase at Sedgefield a month or two later, and Mr. Tom Dobson on the good looking bay, which he afterwards sold to Mr. Appleby, were well up throughout, and amongst others I noticed going well was Mr. Page, who had not seen a deal of hunting before this; in fact he was quite a lightweight, and about this time generally rode a horse or two of his uncle's, Mr. W. Stephenson of Hart, whose father bred and sold Voltigeur to Lord Zetland through the agency of the celebrated Mr. "Billy" Williamson, twice master of the Durham County Hounds. I have seen Mr. Page riding a chestnut mare called Fête Day that

won a lot of prizes, and was a very clever hunter over a country; I fancy that he was on this mare's back during the run; this must have been about the beginning of his career, but he rode well throughout, and was there when Claxon set the fox up on his legs as stiff as a tree, and lifeless as an empty soda water bottle, after fifty-three minutes as good as ever I saw.

Speaking of Mr. Tom Dobson I may say that about this time the brothers Frank and Tom Dobson hunted a lot with us, and a bit later. Mr. Tom was a real keen man when he had that good bay horse, and a nailer it was to be sure. Mr. Frank who used to hunt in scarlet (not over carefully cleaned) because he said it was more economical than black, had a good weight carrying bay mare, which I fancy was stabled at William Armstrong's at Stockton. Mr. Frank was a good judge and breeder of pedigree stock; he used to keep nothing on his farm that was not thoroughbred, whether it was horses, cattle, pigs, sheep. cocks, hens, or dogs. Of greyhounds, too, he was a great admirer, and liked nothing better than a bit of "coursing"; in fact at any kind of sport he was a regular good all round Yorkshireman.

CHAPTER XI.

"Each seems to say come, let us try our speed;
Away they scour, impetuous, ardent, strong,
The green turf trembling as they bound along."

I ALLUDED to Sir William Eden's good stud of horses before; he had about this time old "Hailstorm," a black horse with fired hocks, but a most wonderful performer; he was certainly one of the best hunters I ever saw, and I have heard Sir William say that he considered him perhaps the best he ever had. Then he had "Cardinal," bought of Mr. Bowser, a horse never known to refuse anything, however big or impracticable; a dark-brown horse, a regular old-fashioned, weight-carrying hunter on short legs; if anything short of Sir William's quality, but uncommon clever; and he had a horse called "Sweep," a black horse that he had with him in the Army, and which he rode second in the 8th Hussars' military race at Newbridge. These were his three best about this time, and they were three bad to beat. I rode "Cardinal" once at Quarrington Hill, when Captain Malet was out, and we ran our fox by Shadforth Dene and Witch Hills. We had twenty-five minutes, as hard as we could lick. Just before getting to Witch Hills I speculated a bit, and got a lucky nick in and caught sight of "Charles," and being close to him, told him plainly that he would have

to unbutton his collar; but before I knew where I was he dropped over the ridge of the hill, and went to ground in the rocks at Witch Hills, thus beating us; a bit of a sell, too, for me, after being so confident about getting hold of him. "Cardinal" hit some rails smartish just before this, but perhaps I didn't ride him fast enough at them. Old Mr. Bowser, a rare old sportsman of the old school, had a pack of harriers at Bishop Auckland; he was desperately keen on hunting, and seldom missed a meet of Lord Zetland's or the South Durham. A good old sportsman of the olden kind, who often helped us to find a fox, by telling us where he had seen an outlyer when hunting his harriers, and his judgment could be relied upon.

A very good gallop was that which we had on February 18th, 1880, when we met at Park Head, but unfortunately drew Belburn wood and Merrington Rush blank; worked our way to Coldsides, which harboured a brace, but there wasn't enough scent to cover a threepenny bit, so we could do nothing but spend a bit of time ferreting or ratting, as I call it, about the place. At Gipsy whin we chopped a vixen, asleep, and then went on to Thrislington Banks, where Mr. Ord viewed a fox stealing away up the bank on the opposite side of the railway, which is very awkward to cross just here; however, we managed to get over somehow and laid hounds on, when we found there was a deal more smell in the air than in the morning, and the pack settling nicely down, at once went straight away with their fox, leaving Ferryhill village on the left, and pointing for Croxdale, in the North Durham country; bearing further to the right, they raced into an old dog fox on Hett moors in the evening; it was dusk when they killed him, after running twenty-eight minutes over a fine line of country, and I am

told that hounds have never run over this line since then, though it is twenty-three years gone. It was a sporting gallop, and a bitter cold night; but we had a rattling good pilot home in the person of Dr. Fenwick of Chilton Hall, who led us through Ferryhill village, calling at the house of Dr. Clark, who had, he said, an excellent prescription for persons suffering from chill or exposure on a cold night. You will probably guess what it was, but it was thankfully received, and enabled us to jog on home comfortably in the dark.

Somewhere about this time, but shortly before I think, as it was in the cub hunting season, though I cannot get at the dates, an incident perhaps worthy of passing notice occurred. We had not been blessed with much sport in the morning, and went to what I understand is now called Milburn's whin, where hounds chopped a cub, and at the same moment another made an attempt to break away, but unfortunately ran into a copper collar in the hedge, big and strong enough to hold an elephant. I happened to be alone on the south side of the cover, and jumped off before hounds reached him and cut him free, but not having time to undress him properly let him go with his collar on, and a foot or so of wire trailing behind, which gave him such a fright that he ran as straight as a dart and soon got out of his latitude, affording us seventeen or eighteen minutes' gallop as fast as hounds could race; the country being rough, the field, which was only small, had plenty of spills, one or two of which looked nasty at the time, especially in the case of a gentleman who came from Windlestone with Sir William, whose name I did not know, but I can see him well hung up on some old tree stumps on the Ryal farm. We handled this fox at the right of Bishop

Middleham village pointing for the "Hare and Hounds," one field from the Hylace farm. He was a ripping fine cub, and, of course, was still wearing his collar, which did not seem to have stopped him much; in fact I think it is a good receipt for keeping foxes' heads straight, though you could not depend upon dressing "Charley" so neatly as I saw done on this occasion. Being up at his death in good time I was able to relieve him of his jewellery before any one noticed it, but Lord Henry Vane Tempest who had been going as straight as a crow, as was his custom throughout, thought that there was something suspicious about my movements, but after making a close inspection discovered nothing; still he was very jealous about it, but I said nothing about it at the time, as it had been a first rate gallop, and we all went home light hearted, but I told Claxon all about it on the way home.

I ought to have mentioned the sport we had from Camp whin, in Mr. Harvey's time, with some cubs that Captain Young, a great supporter of foxhunting, though not so often in the field as we should have liked, sent us. I believe he got them (seven in number) from Norway, and they were very small and young, little bigger than rats, and all furry when he sent them to the kennels at Hardwick. Claxon thought that they were too young to rear, and I was very doubtful about the result, but we determined to give them a trial, and with good food, new milk and rabbits we brought them up, until Mr. Burdon's gamekeeper at Castle Eden, who used to send us a lot of cubs at times, sent over an old vixen that had lost her cubs. She did not come to suckle them, as they had been "fending" for themselves for some time, and were quite strong, but, unfortunately, Claxon put her in with the cubs, and she killed a couple

the first night. The five that were left did well, but I could have killed her myself when I saw what the old lady had done: I'd spent so much time over them, feeding and nursing them. These five we turned down in Camp whin, and rattling sport they showed us for two seasons. The first cub-hunting season we killed one, and one in regular hunting. The following season we killed a brace more of them, one showing wonderful sport, and it is a fact that we ran him three Wednesdays in succession under Mr. Harvey's mastership, I think in 1876. The first day we had an hour and forty minutes with him over the Fishburn country, round by Humbleknowle and Galley Law and back to covert. The second Wednesday we had two hours and ten minutes with him over much the same line, but he took us further north this time by Park House whin, leaving Hurworth Burn on the left, and back into a made earth in Camp whin, at the top side. On the third Wednesday we had a poor morning's sport, but Camp whin was called upon once more, when our gallant fox went away rather stiff and groggy. I always went to the north corner to command a good view, and took up a position on the hill side for this purpose: I allowed him a little more time than usual to get warmed up a bit, seeing his condition, then holloaed hounds out to him with a very much improved scent from the morning; away he went, improving at every stride, over the Fishburn and Butterwick country at a rattling pace. As they came past Weterton Cottage (Mr. Milburn's) I shouted to the old gentleman who had run out "they'll tear his jacket to-day," as I saw them coursing up the grass towards the Asylum gashouse, which he nobly tried to reach, but they caught him on the grass about twenty yards from the fence; poor fellow, he had not got over

his previous two Wednesdays' jacketing, and never seemed able to get away from hounds; he was marked in the ear, deaf ear out; that made No. 4, and No. 5 we never accounted for, though we "jealoused" some enemy of foxhunting about him. Mr. Richard Forster of Trimdon Grange had the shooting over Camp whin and the Glebe whin, then a very favourite fox cover in those days, and a keen gentleman for hunting he was, keeping three hunters and a hack; one was a little grey horse, a clinking hunter, and another was a very useful brown mare; he also had old "Nimrod," a grey pony about fifteen hands high, and an ex-steeplechaser. This little horse used to run at the Sedgefield meetings in the old days of natural fences, and once beat the celebrated Carbineer over a country, and was certainly one of the best gallopers and jumpers I ever saw. Mr. Forster kindly gave me a day on him once with the Zetland hounds. We met at Heighington. There was not much scent with the first fox, and hounds couldn't run; it was all ferreting out the line, and Nimrod showed a bit of his temper over this, but when they found a fresh fox, and had a very nice forty minutes with lots of pace, Champion, who then hunted and still hunts the Zetland hounds, passed the remark, "I thought that was a brute in the morning," but he couldn't get away from Nimrod. Mr. Richard Forster was an open, generous gentleman, who entertained every hunting man who passed his house; if he required anything the needful was at once supplied, and never were there more foxes at Glebe whin and Camp whin than in his time. Mr. R. Forster was generally accompanied by his friend Mr. James Tait, a canny Scotch gentleman and fond of the sport. He managed the lime works at Raisby Hill, and

generally rode an old dark chestnut horse called "Billy"; he had been a good horse, but was a bit troubled with the slows, though Mr. Tait was always saying "Aye mon, he con gollup"; if he got a bit behind you could hear him calling out "Ye fool, Billy." He got a nasty fall over some timber or a gate I remember, and broke his wrist, and lost a tooth or two, which made it necessary for him to go to the dentist for repairs. *He's dead; poor fellow.*

Sir William, as I believe I have said before, spared no expense in mounting us on tip-top cattle, and we seldom came to grief, but I had a good purler one morning, off a horse we used to call "Bobby Lamb." Sir William bought him off a friend of Mr. Harvey's. Mr. Harvey used to be fond, when he was master, of bringing a lot of friends of the old school at times, to look at the hounds in the field; men from the Tynedale and Morpeth, and other Northumberland Hunts; with him used to come Mr. John Shiel (rather before my time); Mr. Anderson, who used to take a house at Sedgefield, and was out a few times in my first season with the South Durham; Mr. Briggs, uncle of Mr. William Briggs, a first-class man to hounds, who is still hunting, I am told, going as well and as keen as ever; Mr. Wallace, Mr. Wylam, and Mr. Fred Lamb, the wine merchant, who kept the Newcastle Harriers, and used to combine a little business with pleasure, when he made an incursion into the South Durham country. He sold a horse to Sir William, which carried me for two or three seasons. One morning, when the ground was very hard, he was walking over a place, when he got his foot fast in a piece of wire, which brought him down, and sent me as though I had gone out of a spring-gun on to my head, which, for a few minutes, made

me think that my neck was broken, as he did come down a bustler, and stars were flying about all over my head; I sat there blinking and winking for several minutes, before I knew where I was, and then came round and got up; mounted again, and joined in a good gallop after another fox; next day I was alright, but very stiff about the head, neck and shoulders, and have not forgotten my day on "Bobby Lamb," as he was always called in the hunt, though he was purchased from Mr. Fred Lamb.

During Sir William's last season, in the early cub-hunting, I remember Mr. T. W. Tindall was out one day; he was staying with Mr. Ord, who told me that he had never been out hunting in his life before. We had some capital fun with a fox from Sandy Lees, running a nice ring by Viewly plantations, as if for Elton, and coming back by Oxeye, and killing near Mr. Newby's house. Mrs. Surtees of Redworth, who was then very fond of hunting on a clever brown horse, was out with us, and the brush was handed to her, but when she heard that it was Mr. Tindall's first day, she insisted on the brush being given to him, saying that it might make a good fox-hunter of him. I forget whether we blooded him, but her words came true, for he afterwards became master of the Cambridgeshire Hounds from 1888-91, when, I believe, he died. The last season of Sir William's last mastership was nothing like that of 1879-80; in fact it was one of the worst scenting seasons that I can call to mind, but you have to take things as they come, and there were good days in store for us.

In 1881, Sir William Eden, who had shown excellent sport for three seasons, retired from the mastership in order that he might travel in foreign parts, especially India, and Mr. Ord succeeded him in the mastership. This season was

one of the most remarkable ones for open weather, fine scents and grand sport all round, that I can remember, in fact hounds hardly left their kennels a day without returning home with blood in their favour after a hard day's work, and horses got a fair twilting from day to day which made them rather waspish in the waist, towards the end of the season; no doubt they often prayed for a fortnight's frost, which never came, and I don't believe they got more than a day's rest from fog or frost all the season.

To mention a few good days. November 2nd, when we met at Trimdon. I rode "Old Mat," who was a great favourite hunter of Mr. Mathews, a gentleman who was a colliery owner and manager, and came from South Hetton to Hardwick Hall, whence he hunted a season or two; then gave up, and presented his horse to the Hunt. He ("Matt" was a thoroughly good honest hunter, slow, but a fine natural fencer and timber jumper. He happened a curious accident a little later, when in jumping a fence he landed on a plough handle, which went bang into his shoulder and made a terrible wound, but thanks to the care and attention of "Bob Dews," who came as helper from York, he recovered and was able to hunt again, when Mr. Ord gave him to Mr. Ed. Hall, of Ricknall (father of Tom Hall,* who was afterwards second whipper-in to the Hunt and then went to Scotland), a good old sportsman, fox preserver and puppy walker, just the sort of man who did all in his power for foxhunting, like many another of our South Durham farmers who are "rare sorts," and who thoroughly deserved to have a horse; and it is pleasant to be able to say that the pair, "Neddy" and "Mat," spent many a happy day

* I hear that he has just accepted the post of huntsman to the Linlithgow and Stirling hounds, from May 1st next.

together in the hunting field. When the old horse died he was close on thirty years of age, and had done an astonishing lot of hunting. Talking of horses, a wonderful good mare was "Stewardess," purchased by Mr. Ord from Mr. Beadon for an old song, as she bore the character of being unmanageable at the time, but after a few lessons and finding out her temper during cub-hunting, we got her transformed into a wonderful good hunter, and I shan't forget how well she carried me through a grand run in 1881,* which was about the best season for sport I ever remember; fox-hounds could really run every day during that wet, mild winter, and we always came home with dirty jackets. We met at Traveller's Rest, and finding at Middridge whin, ran straight to Windlestone, where we killed after a fine burst of twenty-two minutes; found a fresh fox in the woods and crossed the Bishop Auckland road and Westerton Colliery railway, leaving the Mill plantation on the right, crossed the Merrington road and went straight for Dene Bridge wood, which our fox left on the right; passing Merrington we rattled along and thence by Roughlea to Ferryhill station, where some of us viewed our fox in a turnip field, and he made again for Merrington, but being headed turned sharp into Windlestone, and made his way at a rattling pace through Eldon Hope plantation by Eldon to Howlish Hall, Leasingthorne Colliery, skirted Merrington Rush and died (a grand old dog fox) by Dene Bridge pit heap, after running two hours and thirty-five minutes with not more than a momentary check. She carried me in the front, beginning to end, of this two hours and thirty-five minutes with scarce a check to mention, and hounds did

* November 11th, 1881; alluded to in Chapter IV.

run that season; this was quite one of the best days I ever saw in that part of the country. Old Tom Place, the "darkie" of Bishop Auckland, and our steeplechase rider and showring man, was out that day on a good old black horse called "Cocoanut," which he used to run at the local hunt race meetings.

The very next day hounds were out, there was some grand sport from the Coxhoe meet.† A good run in the morning of twenty or twenty-five minutes and blood was followed by other short runs; but we found a fourth fox at Camp whin and had a brilliant fifty minutes from Camp whin, below Fishburn, along the valley, by Carrsides, Humbleknowle, through Whin House belt, and up to Murton Blue House whin. I think Mr. John C. Straker, now M.F.H. of the Tynedale hounds, was out, and enjoyed this also very much, telling me at the time that it was the best gallop that he had seen that season. I forget what horse he was riding, even the colour, but I know that he was well mounted for he went thundering well; and I also fancy the late Mr. John Hett, father of the gentleman rider, was out on a dark brown horse. He was a fine horseman, with good hands, a real good man on a young horse. This day I rode old "Mat." Claxon was carried equally well by the "Nun," his favourite grey mare, one of the cleverest that ever looked through a bridle; she belonged to Sir William Eden, who sold her to Mr. Gordon Cunard, after his first mastership; he, later on, sent her up to Tattersall's, and Mr. Ord bought her to carry Claxon, for little money. She was as clever as any cat, and you could not get her down, put her at what you would. Claxon was never off her back

† November 14th, 1881; alluded to in Chapter IV.

if he could help it, and she did no end of work until February 8th, 1884, when he broke her down at the close of one of those fearfully hard days we had in the Bishopton country about that time. Mr. Ord bred some useful hunters from her, and tells me that he has a very promising four-year-old, a grand-daughter of the good old mare, but not the same colour. To finish with the good mare "Stewardess," she was sold at Leicester, when Sir William resumed the mastership of the hounds, and was purchased by a gentleman in Stamford, who broke her to harness; and I remember Mr. Ord telling me, about four or five years ago, that he had just seen her in a dog cart at Stamford, and spoken to the driver about her; this was in 1898 or 1899, and as he bought her from Mr. Beadon as a six-year-old in 1881, she must have earned her own keep and helped a few bad 'uns out as well; it is rather a curious fact that the hunt-horses we rode during this season, though not expensive in the way of cost, lived to be well experienced in both work and age; as the cases of old "Castiron," "Matthew," and "Stewardess" prove, averaging, at their death, about *thirty* years apiece; whilst Mr. Ord had at that time, in his own stable, two, viz., "Sweetsound" and "Controversy," that were going fifteen years later, and did over *two hundred and fifty* days apiece.‡

‡ These two animals did so much work that their performances are worth recording. They hunted, in almost every instance, the whole day, going to the meet and returning home with hounds. The particulars are extracted from an absolutely reliable hunting diary:—

	Sweetsound.	Controversy.
1880-1	15	8
1881-2	26	20
1882-3	25	21
1883-4	38	29
1884-5	31	17
1885-6	19	20
1886-7	11	23
1887-8	6	19
1888-9	16	17
1889-90	25	25
1890-1	18	16
1891-2	14	16
1892-3	13	16
1893-4	16	13
1894-5	9	—
	282	260

In addition to this work, they each did two seasons hunting before they came into their recent owner's possession, and were both successful under National Hunt rules. Their summer holidays were always spent out at grass, and they never had any corn until taken up early in August of each year.

March 17th, 1882, was a good day to wind up the season, especially as ground was hard and dry; met at Coxhoe Bridge. A curious incident occurred this day, when we ran to ground near Dropswell we found a brace of foxes in a drain by the road side, one of which (a dog fox) was quickly expelled and killed. The vixen bolted afterwards, rushed past some horsemen and brushing past the heels of the horse ridden by a keen sportsman, Mr. Greenwell, from a neighbouring hunt, paid the penalty of death, for the horse let out, caught her fair, and killed her on the spot; I never saw a fox killed in this way except on this occasion, but I have myself galloped into a hare and killed it in its seat, when riding old "Stewardess," and seen others do the same. Mr. George Sutton will well remember the hare killed by the old grey mare, Stewardess. On the occasion above referred to I don't know that the blame attached to any one, as in the excitement of the moment all the field were riding about or standing nearer than they should have done, but there was some extremely fancy language exchanged between the honorary secretary of the South Durham and the unfortunate fox killing gentleman, which was amusing for the time, but soon passed off.

Altogether 1881-2 was a wonderful season for open weather, grand scents and number of foxes. The South Durham had during this season about twenty real good

days sport and at least ten "first chop" days, but I cannot give an account of them all, and many, I understand, are referred to in former chapters. The season of 1882-3 was not of course such a splasher as the previous one, but we had a lot of real good sport, and made it warm for the cubs in September, as I know that we killed a leash the first day, about the middle of September, at Foxton plantation and Bog Hall whin, and broke up two and a half brace at Bradbury Wood* (where there has been bloodthirsty work on more than one occasion) and Coldsides. We also did very well in October, and altogether had a brisk cub hunting season, killing nineteen foxes in the fourteen days on which we were out.

On October 13th, we had a clinking good day from Barmpton, when we found a fox in Barmpton whin, which crossed the Skerne twice and ran to ground in Stobbs' earth, after a hard run all over the country of an hour and fifty minutes. What I remember best is that when we checked at the Skerne the first time of crossing, old "Agent," sire of the dog that ate the meat and sausages at Croxdale Hall (by Agent,—Morpeth—Matron), swam the Skerne, which was running bank top full, cast himself to the right and hit off the line; when he threw his tongue the rest of the pack swam over and away they went. We had to go round by the bridge at Barmpton.

On October 27th, 1882, when the meet was at Thorpe we had another clinking good day after a stormy blustering

* The largest number of cubs killed in one morning at Bradbury Wood is ten, viz:—four and a half brace accounted for at the time, and one picked up next morning, making five brace. It may be added that at the same time six brace went away before a kill was recorded! Possibly the North Durham hounds have eclipsed this, as I hear on the authority of their Master, that they once killed in one day the following mixed bag, viz.:—a brace of foxes, two cats, one hare, one cock pheasant, one weasel, and one hedgehog!

night and a long draw, during which "Lively" caused a lot of trouble with her temper, being disgusted at not finding a fox; but when the needful came to hand at Sandy Lees, she was the first hound to speak to it, and first out of the covert. Old Layman, who was poisoned, was the sire of Lively, and had just the same temper on a riotous or bad scenting day. Lively was by Layman—Ada. They were a queer tempered family, as Lictor sire of Layman was very shy, and would turn it up on very short notice. Not the sort to breed from exactly, but still when they got on to the line of a fox and settled down, it was poor fun for the fox!

Well, to return to the day, after a long blank draw hounds pushed a leash out of Sandy Lees, and we had a tremendous run in the Hurworth country. The first point was Goosepool, where hounds divided, a few couple sticking to the hunted fox and killing him close by; the body of the pack went away with a fresh one, and ran a ring by Fighting Cocks whin back to covert; then on to Burn wood and Farrer's whin, which was skirted within a field. Church whin was the next point, and then on to Fighting Cocks, where Charley went to ground in a drain which runs up to the reservoir. The time from Sandy Lees was about two hours. I see Claxon's diary says an hour and fifty minutes, which will no doubt be exactly correct. He rode "Duchess," a real good little mare, and I was on "Stewardess," and had nothing to complain of.

Altogether it was not a bad day for cub-hunting. Good sport followed in November, and I have a keen recollection of seventy odd minutes from Foxhill, and a kill near Elton in the back lane, about the end of the month when I rode "The Widow." I remember this day because we met at

Aycliffe, and were under orders to draw the Windlestone country, but Sir William had not finished the shooting there, so we went the other way, and probably very fortunately, as we fell in for such a fine run.

I have also a vivid recollection of Mr. W. H. A. Wharton being out on this day on his favourite grey mare, and seeing him get a flying start, but, as bad luck would have it, he landed into a blind ditch before we had gone very far, which caused him to take a back seat for a time, and the pace being hot he was unable to recover his forward position before we ran into our fox.

About this time we had several good spins in the Hurworth country, as foxes took to running very much from Foxhill and Barker's plantation to Goosepool, and we used to look forward to a gallop in somebody else's country.

On December 26th, 1882, we had a good day with three or four inches of snow on the ground, running for about three hours, though there was a good deal of "hedgerow business" about it. Sometimes you may get a good day in the snow, and we generally hunted in it this season, but once or twice had to give up for the simple reason that we could not get through any gates.

January 12th, 1883, was a day to be remembered, both by those who were out and saw the grand hunt and by myself, who was the victim of an accident. We ran round by Lee Close, Bleach House plantation, over Stillington moors, and over the Stockton railway by Crowdy Hall. "Vulcan," the horse I was riding, was terrified at trains; and, as one happened to be passing, he bolted, dragged me through a thorn bush, which didn't add to my beauty, and then made for the railings alongside the line; charged them, and getting too near, caught them above the knees and

came a real good crowner on the cinder road. My neck swelled up at once; it was a good thing it is only a short one, as had it been any longer, it would have been knocked clean out. "Vulcan" went bang on to his head, too, but was no worse. I got my other horse when I came round a bit, and rode quietly home, which caused me to miss one of the best days of this season, or, I am told, of any other season. I think I am right in saying that both Mr. John Beach and Mr. Baxter lost horses during the run, as there were many accidents, which is not surprising when you take into consideration the points, one, they said, of six miles and another of eight, over the cream of the country. The fox went to ground below Great Stainton, and a passing sweep's brush was utilized to bolt him, without success. A terrier, I was told, was then put in and had a terrible time with the fox, which broke his jaw. I came round after a good dose of Elliman's embrocation, and was alright in a few days, but my neck was black for a fortnight or more. This January provided us with fine sport nearly every day.

CHAPTER XII.

"To whom nought comes amiss—
One horse or another—that country or this;
Who through bad falls, and bad starts, undauntedly still.
Rides up to the motto "be with them I will."

LORD HENRY VANE TEMPEST and Lord Herbert both hunted with us; I always thought Lord Henry was one of the boldest of men I ever saw; he never turned his head at anything, and always seemed to be in the front wherever we were; he had many a fall but was always up again and coming on, and was a wonderfully lucky man for seeing good runs with the South Durham, and seemed to bring us good sport always when he stayed at Wynyard. The last day of hunting that he had with us in Mr. Harvey's last season was in the Great Stainton country; after running several rings round and round for an hour and forty-five minutes, we killed a fox in Elstob covert, just in the corner of the covert. Lord Henry jumped down, went neck and crop over the rails into the whins, and brought out the fox, which finished his hunting season in 1878. He *would* handle the fox first if he could when the hounds killed, and I remember him jumping up to his neck into a stell in the Carrs after one and bringing it out in his arms near Wild

Goose plantation. This was on November 3rd, 1882, after a meet at Sands Hall.

One day we met at Embleton on February 5th, 1883, with a large hunting party staying at Wynyard. The present Marquis of Londonderry was out, Lord Henry and Lady Aline Vane Tempest, and many others. We went to Brierton, and found a brace on Jordison's moors; after a sharp scurry at close quarters, our fox turned his head northwards, leaving Dalton Crag on the right, over Dove Cote farm to Elwick; then over some turnip fields towards Sheraton, thence to Cole Hill, through Roper's plantation, where the fox rested, but we stirred him up again, and away he went straight for Hutton Henry; we ran hard from there to Wingate plantation, and thence for Hurworth Burn, but the fox bore to the left by the disused brick ground, where Lord Henry made a bold jump over some sleepers or boards into an old brick pond, and came out covered with yellow water, though I do not think he parted from his horse; he didn't care, not he, and led several others into a trap, as you couldn't get over the garden rails at the back side of Wingate Colliery. I knew that and whipped into a side road and there met Lady Aline just as Lord Henry dropped into the pond; she was rather upset at first, and glad to see him out again; she followed me as I told her it was impossible to get the other way, and just as we got round by the main street and near the colliery, met the fox by the big steam boilers; he turned and popped down underneath one of the boiler fires. The old man in charge of the boiler was very excited, and shouted out that the fox had gone under his boiler, and said he thought at first it was the "Old Gentleman." I

LORD HENRY VANE-TEMPEST.

remember that he got into a hot shop, and would soon be roasted—the old man said it was cool there, but I thought I 'd rather it was him than me! Whilst we were coaling him out with a rake, Lord Henry arrived on the scene, jumped off his horse, and just as he was, pushed everybody to one side, and made a bold bid to get hold of the fox's brush, or any part of him that he could reach. He pulled him out by the head, and brandished him about to clear a road for him to get out; it was a wonderful thing that he was not bitten, nor any other people. The bottom bars had just scorched the fur on his back, and the hounds soon dispatched him. There was a large and fashionable field of colliers at the finish, and the language was more than I could understand, so overcome with excitement were they. We called at Mr. Armstrong's, at Wingate, on the way home, and had a little refreshment, which was greatly needed and very acceptable. The lads of Wingate have never forgotten that day, as most of them asked the hunting gentlemen,—"Gie us the price of a pint, chappie," and they got it, too, a good many times over; there was no change left when we started away. The boilerman got a bit of the fox, and was very proud of it. I was talking to a man a short while since (1903) at East Howle Colliery, and he told me that he was a lad at Wingate then and remembered all about it, and said it was the best day's hunting they ever had in that neighbourhood.

The Wynyard family throughout were always particularly well disposed to the farmers in the country, especially when out hunting, and always ready to lend a helping hand towards fox-hunting, with donations to sweeten the ladies in regard to their poultry losses, and also very generous for any little trifle or help in the matter of assistance given to

a countryman during a run, or to an engine driver for stopping his train when hounds happened to be on the line.

Lady Castlereagh, now the Marchioness of Londonderry, was very fond of hunting, and particularly fond of seeing hounds work. She always seemed to be interested in them at a meet, and looked them over, and when once shown them could generally pick out the prize hounds again. She had a good knowledge of the country as regards fox-hunting, and knew what hounds were doing, which enabled her to see a lot of sport that others who rode harder did not—for she seemed to know the line a fox would make, which is very important in this kind of sport.

Lady Aline Vane Tempest had beautiful hands and seat, and was very fond of the sport; she went well, and, with some good cattle, was generally to the front. I remember one day a little chestnut with a white foot, she was riding, got its foot fast in a gate that was lying flat on the ground, just as we came under the Stockton and Sunderland line, near Carlton, and it was wedged so tight that the horse walked two or three steps with the gate on its hind leg; I never saw such a thing happen before. Sir William Eden, I distinctly remember, was riding near to or alongside her ladyship at the time, and, I think, dismounted to assist her; and almost at the same time, with a piece of luck, the gate gave way and no harm was done. We ran that day close to Stillington station, I remember it so well. She was always well mounted, and seldom had a fall.

In those days, Lord Herbert used to hunt; he began riding a fat, grey horse, that looked more suitable for the butcher than the hunting field, but the horse was really in good, hard condition; he was a good, clever horse that wanted rousing a bit, and got it sometimes; as he went on,

Lord Herbert improved his stud and used to knock along, but his hunting career with the South Durham hounds was limited, unfortunately. He had two greys, one I have mentioned and the other Sir William Eden bought.

One day, Lord Herbert asked me what sort of sport we'd been having, and, after giving him details of our proceedings, I hoped that he had been enjoying good sport in Ireland, which he answered, with a smile, "that he and the present Marquis of Londonderry had divided eighteen falls there in one week!" A pretty good record.

Very few ladies hunted in those days. I can only remember Lady Aline, Mrs. Ord, Mrs. Gourley, from Hartlepool, with a little boy in a velvet hunting cap, whom I blooded, and who wouldn't leave us till the hounds went home: Mrs. Thompson of Dyke House, who rode a grey, and one or two more.

Mr. George Metcalf Watson, who lives at Maltby now, was an enthusiastic hunter then; he never was a break-neck rider, but was very fond of hunting and saw a lot of sport, as did his brother, who came out with us at this period. Then there was Mr. R. C. Denton, who seldom missed a day; he had a very good black mare with a lot of quality, and she went, I believe, to carry the Marquis of Zetland, to whom she gave great satisfaction. Mr. Denton had also a thick-set bay mare, "a little big 'un," which carried him wonderfully well. He was a keen 'un in the hunting field—went well; bred some good horses, and was altogether a downright sportsman. A good sort was his brother, Mr. John P. Denton, who occasionally hunted with us on an animal of gigantic proportions, which was more like a giraffe than a hunter, and which we called the "Clothes-horse." Mr. John was always in wonderful spirits, and could turn

his hand to anything; he was always up to a lark, and there was a good deal of John Bull about him. One day he borrowed Mr. John Stephenson's terrier, "Old Duster,' that used to be at the kennels and hunt with us, to go and thrash a terrier belonging to a watchmaker at Stokesley. I think his name was Mr. Unthank, better known, perhaps, as "Clocky Unthank." The Stokesley terrier was a bit of a bully, and knocked down every other terrier in the town, till "Old Duster" appeared, and shook his commission." When Mr. "Clocky" saw the "red light," and thought that he had had enough, he asked Mr. Denton to part them, which Mr. Denton declined to do, unless each took hold of his dog's tail; when parted, Mr. Unthank asked Mr. Denton whose dog it was, and Mr. Denton pretended that it was quite a stranger to him. Then the Stokesley clock maker offered to take and keep the dog until his owner turned up, which Mr. Denton declined; as he'd befriended the dog in the battle he thought he was entitled to take care of him until his owner turned up, and he marched off with him in triumph. How Claxon and I laughed when he told us the whole story, probably with some "extras" of his own, but the above is exactly what did happen.

Mr. John Stephenson, also of Norton, who was son of Mr. Stephenson of Hart, the well-known breeder of "Voltigeur," also frequently hunted with us—and a very good fox preserver and puppy walker he was. His best horse, I think, was a good weight-carrying bay hunter called Beverley, 16 hands 2 high. He was a fine timber jumper, as is referred to in verse 35, page 76 of this book.

Amongst others we then had out were Major Ropner (now Sir Robert Ropner) who entered heart and soul into the fun, as they tell me he does in all that he under-

takes; he was also a very good swimmer or waterman, as unfortunately in trying to get round or over the beck at Bottle Hill Mill he fell into the mill dam, which gave him every chance to show his swimming abilities, which he did to perfection. I helped him out when he got to the bank, but he swam like a duck in deep water; it would be six or seven feet deep, and ropes had to be procured to get his horse out.

I remember his favourite horse—old "Paddy," a dark chestnut horse that saw him through several good runs; he was one of the hardest horses I ever saw, but subject to terrible stringhalt; every now and then his "off hind" would go up like a pump handle. I believe he hunted until he was twenty-two years old, and died when he was thirty-two years of age. Major Ropner had another good black horse with a white face called, I believe, "Baldersby."

Speaking of old "Paddy," I believe that he was bought by the Major from Mr. John Appleby (a keen hunting man at South Wingate, and brother of Mr. Thomas). They told me at the time that his favourite food was newly washed clothes, and that he was happiest when chewing the contents of the clothes line!

One of the cheeriest sportsmen it has fallen to my lot to see was certainly Colonel Sadler, who generally came to the meets in the Friday country, and no one enjoyed a good day's sport better; nothing seemed to disturb his genial temper, and I never saw him the least "put out;" I suppose it's a grand thing to have such a command or control of temper, and probably that is the reason why the Colonel has taken such a high position in the House of Commons; I don't know much about politics, but I always notice that those who have served a good apprenticeship

to Foxhunting succeed best in that line when they take it up, and I need only mention the noble Marquis of Londonderry, Colonel Sadler, and Sir Robert Ropner to prove the truth of this.

A rare thruster in the "eighties" was Mr. William Briggs, who got some good cattle when he saw the kind of sport we were having about 1882 and 1883. One of his best horses was a bay called "Peter," a very fine galloping and clever horse, which I think he afterwards sold to Sir William Eden, for no doubt a stiffish price. I remember a good day in the Kelloe country about this time, when we ran for over two hours, and my horse's tail was going round like a windmill; but Mr. Briggs and "Peter" were sailing away as if they had just started, and I ventured to remark to him that I would like to exchange horses!

Mr. Appleby of Ashfield House, Greatham, was one of a lot of keen foxhunters from the east country, which included Mr. Fisher, Mr. John Beach and his friend Mr. Baxter, and also a good sporting farmer or two, such as Mr. Robert Stephenson, of Brierton, who sowed the new covert at Brierton (on the late Mr. Furness's farm) for us, and had a very useful brown horse, old "Gameboy," whom I once rode in a farmer's race at Sedgefield, and got an awful cropper through being cannoned against at the open ditch, the first year that open ditches were introduced; it was old "Pigeon," that belonged to Charley Robinson, the sporting farmer of the "Brakes," that knocked me over—she fell and came right underneath my horse's legs, as she was coming crossways on; there was three of us down, but though a good deal shaken none of us were seriously injured. But for this accident I think the old

horse (then eleven or twelve years old) would have won, as he was a good stayer and sticker, and later on I may refer to him again as I rode him for some part of a season when Mr. Stephenson was unable to hunt. Mr. Appleby was a keen foxhunter, and in those days a bold rider with a good class of animal which he always kept; he always tried to be at the tail of hounds, and Mr. Harvey once remarked by way of a joke, "there's Mr. Appleby first and the hounds nowhere"—but he did not mean it seriously. I never knew the names of his horses, and he seemed to change them frequently, but I remember he bought the good looking bay of Mr. Thomas Dobson, which carried the latter so well in a run that will be referred to later on—this was on January 5th, 1880. I never saw Mr. Appleby go so well as he did one afternoon when we found a fox near Morden and ran him past Homer Carr to the Tilery wood at Wynyard, after partaking, I understand, of some good old brown sherry at Sands Hall. He must have seen a good deal of hunting and gained a lot of experience in the hunting field, as I see that he still keeps it up as keen as ever; his sons were at school when I was with the South Durham, but used to come on ponies; one of them unfortunately got kicked and broke his leg—this happened near Elton, and was owing to a young horse of Armstrong's of Stockton, and ridden by Dick Humble, a very fine horseman, lashing out at a gateway, and breaking the poor boy's leg—it was very unfortunate, as he was just beginning to hunt.

Mr. Fisher, and sometimes Mrs. Fisher of West Hartlepool, hunted with us; he had two good horses, one a bay mare that blew her trumpet a bit, the other a brown, which carried him wonderfully well, as he knocked along

at one time, and I 've seen him ride a bit over the country. Mrs. Fisher, I think, generally went home after the meet.

Mr. Beach would come a long way to the meets with his friend, Mr. Baxter, and was generally well mounted, having useful horses both in the field and showground, until some one else fell in love with them, when they frequently disappeared, and new faces took their places. He always liked a good horse, and has, I think, been a wonderfully lucky man with horses, but perhaps it is due more to his judgment than to luck, as he always knew the good points of a horse, and generally had his eye on them some time before buying. He was always fond of a grey. Mr. Baxter only hunted one or two seasons, on a keenish bay mare he bought from Mr. Beach; his heart was in the right place, but not, unfortunately, his hands always; and, as he would have a go at every fence, he very often came to grief, as he rode full tilt at his fences, however blind they were.

Amongst others, there was a sporting Parson, the Rev. C. H. Ford of Bishopton, who was well known all over the country; he was not a bruiser over the country, but saw a lot of sport and did a lot of good, being a staunch fox preserver, and always ready to lend a helping hand to sport in any shape. He died before I left the country, and was greatly missed by the sporting population.

There were not many keener sportsmen than Mr. T. H. Faber, in the eighties; a nice, quiet rider, with good hands, he seemed to me to be a good schoolmaster for a young 'un, and could make them jump to his hands. I hear that he is "on the shelf" a bit just now, but have no doubt that he will see the error of his ways in giving up fox-hunting, unless he is compelled to do so, like myself.

Nor must I omit Mr. John Fox of Norton, who generally

rode a grey horse, or mare, and looked on the bright side of things; sometimes he would come accompanied by Mr. John Page Sowerby of Stokesley (a relative, I think, of Mr. Page), who enjoyed a gallop in the Norton or Bishopton country. Then I remember Mr. John Armstrong, whose brother "Willie" was in the Castle Eden district, and used to entertain us with "something hot" when we passed his house on a cold winter's day; and Dr. Hind of Norton, or Stockton, who joined us for several seasons, and rode, I fancy, a good chestnut mare that had won a few races; but I cannot for the life of me remember her name at this moment, though I am certain she was by the "Miner."

It didn't matter what part of the country we were in the first few seasons I was with the South Durham, Mr. George C. Whitwell was always at the meet and the finish, and was always cheery. He once nearly threw me into the Skerne on Hardwick Carrs! There was a chained gate and I got off to lift it off the hinges, but I couldn't stir it; off he jumps—as strong as an elephant—claps his back to it, gave one haul, and very nearly sent me and the gate all away together into the Skerne. He very nearly tore the post up, too, and sent me sprawling; they did laugh at me, and often said, "what's the use of you getting off to lift a gate." This was the same day, October 19th, 1881, that Mr. Ord's (this was in the first season of his mastership) brown horse, "Controversy," slipped off a bridge at Trundle plantation, just after we killed our fox, after a real good run of fifty-five minutes from Camp whin, through Hylace, the Ruffus, by Narbel Hill, the Poor Carrs, and on towards Trundle plantation. The horse always seemed to be very nervous when crossing any unsound or slippery places, or bridge, and slipped off as one corner of the bridge broke away; he disappeared altogether, with the exception of his head, which

was held up until assistance arrived in the way of ropes, when we put one round his neck and dragged him right up the steep bank—about fourteen or fifteen men joining in the pull; this is far the best way to get a horse out of any such difficulty, as it leaves the legs free; though some people always want to draw horses by means of their body or legs, and I saw this occur only a few days ago, when a horse was being moved. The brown horse was none the worse for his ducking, and lived, I understand, to carry his owner thirteen seasons more. But, perhaps, a still more remarkable animal was Mrs Ord's "Sweetsound," by "Young Trumpeter." Another instance of a horse living to a great age and doing a tremendous lot of work, that I call to mind, was old "Castiron," a well named horse in his youth, that was aged when Mr. Ord bought him at Mr. Coupland's sale at Leicester in 1882. He was bought for Claxon to ride, and had a deformity in one eye, but he did a lot of hunting, and was given to Mr. Wiseman Robson of Stoney Flat, a sporting farmer who used to come out and ride hard very often with a large bottle of whiskey in one pocket. He rode the horse until he was twenty-five years old, and then turned his attention to harness work for a year or two; I don't know what his end was, but I heard of him being alive about four years ago when he must have been close on thirty.

Although Mr. Whitwell was so heavy he always carried a spare horseshoe with him in a leather case with a joint in it, so that it might be made to fit any horse on a pinch. I used to carry a spare shoe and fuse case to bolt foxes in the Vale of White Horse country, but it is very dangerous to carry a stirrup leather round your shoulders as some do; I nearly had a bad accident in the big ditch country of Vale of White Horse. The horse came back

over on to me; I was underneath, and he got his foot through the leather in the "scrumble"—fortunately for me in getting up he pulled it over my head, but I never liked carrying one again in this way—and never did.

A good hunting man, and one who understood it and did it thoroughly, was Mr. Joseph Fife who lived at Croft near Darlington, and liked a day in the Fox Hill Country. His get up was always what they call faultless, and he always wore a very much cut away swallow tail coat; sometimes his friend Captain Maltby would accompany him, and I have seen Mr. W. H. A. Wharton riding with them on his good looking grey, which I always call to mind when his name is mentioned.

Perhaps the finest sportsman, if I may be allowed to say so, hunting occasionally with the South Durham in my time was Mr. W. Forbes,* now master of the Hurworth hounds, and late master of the Kildare, in Ireland, for some seven or eight seasons. He was apparently a gentleman of the old school, who hunted for hunting's sake, and from pure love of horses and hounds; not one of the thrusting galloping school, always on the top of hounds, but one whose ambition was to show good sport to his field when hunting his own hounds, and who liked to see it when he went from home. I never saw him in a carriage or conveyance of any sort in my life; his proper place seemed to be outside of a horse, and I have always heard

*Mr. W. Forbes, master of the Kildare Hounds, came to the Spa Hotel, Croft, in January, 1882, and hunted from there for some weeks, in consequence of the hounds having been poisoned in Kildare, and all hunting having been stopped there. When things had quietened down a little he returned to Kildare, and continued to hunt the hounds until 1884. Finding the hunting in Durham and Yorkshire congenial to his tastes, he came back again to the Hurworth country, and in 1888 assumed the mastership of the Hurworth Hounds — a position which he has since maintained with unqualified success, and it is gratifying to hear that the present season has been one of the best during his long and successful mastership.

that no distance would prevent him riding to a meet and home after the day's sport, where he would arrive as a rule not much before dinnertime. I am told that he still keeps this up, or rather did until a recent unfortunate accident befel him, from which everyone must wish him a complete recovery, and a quick one, too.

The late Colonel Wilson was one of the best strangers that came out with us, sometimes staying with Sir William Eden at Windlestone. He was a good horseman and hard man to beat over a country, having a good eye, nerve and thorough knowledge of fox-hunting. There was no better preserver of foxes than he was in his own country, and I have always heard no more gallant soldier. His half-brother, Mr. Wilson Fitzgerald, was a bruiser, especially in the timber and water line; he once went over Morden Carrs like a duck, but I don't know to this day how he managed it.

In the eighties, too, we used occasionally to see Mr. and Mrs. Curry from near Stockton, who enjoyed their sport in a quiet way, and there were the Brothers Cameron; the elder brother had the Hardwick shooting, and was a very keen hunting man when we first came into the country, but he dropped off terribly after a time, when he married, and took to the gun. His younger brother, Mr. Watson Cameron, did not hunt so much, being a delicate lad; at least he was always said to be so, but I am glad to learn that he is much improved in health, and now attends the meets regularly, and goes well on a good looking dun.

I also remember Mr. Robert Bicknell out, once or twice. A gentleman in the engineering line, who was fond of mixing up a bit of Yorkshire* with his ordinary conversation, and caused people to stare at him at times, which he seemed to like as he went on with it. His friends called him "Bob," and he seemed to be a cheery, popular young man.

* He always said he put it on "for't sak' o' euphony!

CHAPTER XIII.

"Care to our coffin adds a nail no doubt,
And every grin, so merry, draws one out!"

A VERY cheery sportsman was Mr. Charles Backhouse, then, I believe, living at Norton, who used to come out with us occasionally, mounted, as far as I can remember, generally on a weight-carrying bay. He was always in very high spirits and the best of humours, and seemed to have a good story or two, in fact a very large quantity in the sporting line, which helped to while away a bad scenting day; he would generally retail his stories in not a very mild tone, which very often gave the fox a chance of stealing away at a quiet corner, at the other side of the whin or plantation, to which I used to make with all haste; thus enabling hounds to get a good start with their fox, and the "field" to quickly get their pipes opened. I hear that he has now gone to live at Favordale, which is a place that always brings fox-hunting to my mind when it is mentioned, because many a mount have I had given me with the Earl of Zetland's hounds, and other packs, by the late Mr. John

Stowell, who formerly lived there, and generally kept a few good hunters on hand; and was glad to offer a mount to any one who could ride, and give them a schooling; he (Mr. Stowell) was a grand fox preserver, and Stowell's whin, near Favordale, was a sure find, as he always prepared it well with food—rabbits, hens, pigeons, etc.—for a day or two before hounds came; he also had a lot of dry drains put down on his farm, for shelter for foxes in wet weather, so that if we could not find a fox above ground, we generally were safe of one below. A little north of Favordale lived a grand old sportsman, in his day, the late Colonel Hall of Heighington, who never seemed to be really happy unless he was out hunting, or on horseback, with his stud of handy little light-weights; he had two rattling good little mares, a bay and a brown, the latter was called "Menzies," after Mr. James Menzies, then of Sands Farm, Sedgefield, and now the well known Clerk of the Course at Shincliffe; Sir William Eden bought her as a five-year-old, and she carried me two or three seasons. When Sir William gave up the hounds Mr. Ord bought her, at York, and she carried Claxon a season, but was a trifle under his weight; so Mr. Ord let Colonel Hall have her, as he had always been very "sweet on her," since the time he saw me pop over a big fence and ditch near Simpasture, when the little mare covered about twenty-four feet. I always heard that the late Colonel Hall had been a very gallant soldier, and also a very nice shot; in fact he was a thorough all-round sportsman and good entertainer of all fox-hunters, when Lord Zetland's hounds met at Heighington. Being one of the old-fashioned school, he was himself fond of a "horn of old ale," and always highly recommended it; from personal experience I can say that it was worth all he said about it;

poor old gentleman, when too feeble to hunt on horseback, he might be seen in the neighbourhood of a meet when hounds were out, and was always very eager to know all that had happened throughout the day; in fact, he kept a couple of horses for no other purpose but that his groom might go out and report to him, at night, a full account of the day's sport. The Colonel bred a young horse or two, especially a young black horse, which was sold to Sir William Eden on his, the Colonel's death, and which I rode and schooled as a four-year-old; and a very good light-weight hunter he turned out.

A character in his way was Alderman Smith of Stockton, who was wonderfully fond of hunting; he generally rode a kind of thoroughbred racing cast-off; and as a rule they were very hot and pulled a good deal; but he sailed away gallantly on them, though perhaps to the danger of those just in front of him. I won't soon forget the brown mare charging a high gate one day, and my helping to pick the poor Alderman up, who lay on one side of the gate, and the horse and his teeth on the other! A queer old bird was "Kitty" Jordison, the soda water manufacturer of Stockton, who had a cork leg that used to twist round at times; I remember hearing a good story about him; he had a fall near Two Mile houses, and his cork leg got screwed round, so he had to call at a farm house with the toes of one foot pointing to his body. "Bless me," said the farmer's wife, "what's the matter"—"why Missus," said "Kitty," "I've just twisted my leg round; let me go into a room by myself and I'll soon put it right"—she showed him in, and in a few minutes he came out apparently quite sound; when she saw him, she said "God bless me, I was just going to send for the doctor; I never

heard of a broken leg being set and mended in five minutes!"

Mr. J. W. Clarke, called by his friends Mr. "Jock" Clarke, of Guisborough, occasionally had a day with us. As a young man he was known as a "bruiser." I remember he had a very good grey mare by the "Drake," about seventeen hands high, on which he was bad to beat. Captain and Mrs. Towers-Clark used to hunt with us towards the end of my time. Captain Towers-Clark had been, I think, master of the West Meath from 1883-6, and was, I suppose, like Mr. Forbes, driven out of Ireland in consequence of the wholesale poisoning of hounds and foxes. Occasionally there came out Major O'Shaunessy and Captain J. Burn-Murdock, a fine rider to hounds, and as gallant, I am told, on the field of battle. A Friday meet often brought out also Mr. Robert Colling, always a keen foxhunter, and his son, R. W. Colling, the well-known ex-jockey, whom I have seen going very well; amongst other Hurworth men were the late Mr. Thomas Wilkinson, of Neasham Abbey, a rare sportsman of the old school, who seemed to love sport for sport's sake, and was descended from a line of foxhunting masters, the Wilkinsons of Neasham Abbey. Mr. Thomas, too, was unbeatable as an otter hunter, and no one, I believe, knew more of the science of hunting in the water than he did; I never was very fond of cold water myself, and preferred sport on "*terra firmer*," as they call it.

I must not omit the name of George Hirst, who was one of the keenest of our foxhunting farmers when I came into the country in 1874; he had, I believe, originally been a sailor, and like all sailors, was apt to be a little excited when he got astride a horse, and didn't always quite know where he was going to. He had, at one time, a very

good grey cob, and was fond of telling a "kettle yarn" about how he jumped a road and two hedges on him, and the fright he got, when in passing over the road, he saw three prostrate red-coats lying beneath him, and heard their mutterings and groans ascending; but I was always a bit jealous of this story of George's and I think that he was riding his celebrated mount, "Nightmare," at the time! When "Omega" became the property of Mr. R. F. Trenholm, George travelled the country with him, and is still to be seen about the roads when hounds meet near Fishburn or Holdforth.

About this time Mr. John Charlton, the celebrated artist, who painted Mr. Harvey's presentation picture, used to come out and enjoy a bit of sport with us. He rode a little chestnut mare of cobby stamp, about fifteen hands high, and a goodish performer. One day in the Sadberge country he rode with his nose in my pocket most of the day, though I was on "Stewardess," whose jumping powers had no end, but it was late in the afternoon before he was able to realise what he was taking on, as when hounds ran hard at night I gave him the benefit of a black bath in an old moaty brook between Sadberge and Barmpton. He and his mare came out black as sloes, and Mr. Appleby wisely pulled up when he saw what colour he was going to be painted, and recommended the artist to take a wider berth of me in future, which advice he appeared to follow.

Perhaps I had better get on to a day or two's hunting now, and I must briefly refer to April 11th, 1883, as a disastrous day, as poor old "Layman" (the second hound in Mr. Harvey's presentation picture) fell down dead after picking up some poison. We missed him, of course, at once, but didn't find him until the next day, when we

searched a plantation for him. I remember the day particularly, because Dr. Fenwick, at whose house we met, asked me if I could find a fox anywhere, and I said I knew where one generally lay in his kennel. He volunteered to go and help to look for it, but it lay *dead* on our going to the spot; undoubtedly having had a touch of the same dose as poor old "Layman," but it must have been done that morning as the fox was still warm, and a fine fellow he was!

Two days later we met at Fishburn to finish the season, and had a rattling gallop of thirty-two minutes from a holloa at Humbleknowle, by Galley Law, Butterwick Moor, Whinhouse Belt, Butterwick plantations, Lumpley, across the Wynyard station railway, pulling our fox down close to Low Swainston. Only Mr. Ord, Mr. Briggs and myself near them at the finish; in fact, we had broken the fox up before Claxon and the rest of the "field" had turned up, though we "whoo—whooped" for fully five minutes. We followed this up with a nailing forty minutes from Homer Carr into Wynyard, and back again to Watt's plantation, running our beaten fox into some out-buildings at Thorpe Moor farm—thus finishing the season in good style. It was a very fine warm day, but there was no sun, and the fallows were dry and dusty; still hounds ran beautifully over every kind of land and field.

On October 26th, 1883, I rode old "Mat" at the Newbeggin meet, and we had a splendid hour and fifty-five minutes from Foxhill, running all over the Redmarshall, Bishopton and Elton country as far as Eaglescliffe Junction, and killing our fox on Viewley Hill farm, just north of Elton. I ought to say that we had a fast ring of ninety-five minutes in the morning from the same good covert, but changed foxes when the second run began; the going

was capital, still it was a very hard day for horses, which owing to the lateness of the cub-hunting season were hardly fit yet.

November 23rd was another good day, when I rode old "Castiron," and we had two famous runs—one from Foxhill, just under an hour, and another from Watt's moor to Camp whin, stopping hounds when it was dark, after about an hour and a quarter's galloping. There was a lot of tumbling about during these runs, but nothing of any particular moment; the second fox was a singularly light coloured one. Possibly it may have been one of the same litter as a vixen we chopped on Butterwick Moor in the following month (December 21st, I find on looking at Claxon's diary); this vixen was not merely light-coloured, but quite white in many places. Foxes vary in colour very much, and we killed a blue one in the West country one season about this time, after finding him at Mainsforth whin. Whilst on the subject of curiously marked foxes, I might say that we once killed three cubs in the Great Stainton district, all of which had more or less white pads.

Friday, March the 21st, was a Great Stainton meet, and last day of Mr. Ord's mastership. Drew some 20 coverts, and just saved the blank day; but all earths were open. In Mr. Harvey's time and towards the end of his mastership, we had a similar narrow squeak of a blank day; after drawing the Sedgefield country all round there only remained a very unlikely place, the "Devil's Elbow," near the Asylum, to be visited. As we were on the way to draw it, I viewed a fox in the middle of the Durham road, which undoubtedly had heard us coming and slipped away. We, of course, got a good start with him, left Hardwick and Sands Hall on

the left, Bradbury and Morden on the right, round by Bog Hall, and slinging round to the left passed Neseless, Homer Carr, Watt's moor and plantation, then over the road into Layton Lings and Black Squares, where other foxes being on foot we had to stop them late at night, as it was after six when we found, and we had forty minutes with him. The late Mr. Creighton Forster, the sporting wine merchant, who was also Master of the Durham Beagles, was out, and I can see him now going for all he was worth, as did many others; indeed, all were on the ride, probably thinking that the old gentleman from the "Elbow" was after them! I am afraid that anyone who may get hold of the account in print of these runs with hounds, exciting though they appeared to me at the time, will soon "drop their hands," so I will cut them short, and merely refer to one or two more which seem uppermost in my mind just at present.

January 25th, 1884, was as good a day's sport after a meet at Two Mile Houses as you wish to see. We got on to one of the Goosepool foxes at Fox Hill, and had a real fifteen minutes scurry after him, followed by a good hunting run, but he beat us; then we had upwards of an hour from Elton Moor up to Urlay Nook and Cowley Moor in the Hurworth country. When we passed Burnhope, Mr. Thompson, who never could bear the music of hounds, rushed out and charged the field, flourishing a long stick. Mr. Tom Dobson was first attacked, and when I passed they were getting on "thickish!"

November 13th, 1884, we always called the Elwick Hall Day, when we had fifty-five minutes really good, and killed on the lawn at Elwick, much to the discomfiture of a party of ladies who were having a tea party at the Vicarage, and fled out shrieking in all directions when the fox and hounds

appeared! The Hon. George Lambton was out this day, coming from Windlestone with Sir William, and Mr. Ord had given a mount on a four-year-old to a friend of his, Mr. Beaumont Beadon, from the Devonshire Stag-hounds' country. Not being accustomed to jump much, he told me, with the stag, he took the opportunity of getting all he could, and tried the young horse highly over a gate at Richardson's whin. Mr. Lambton and I were standing close by, and when he hit it hard all round, without however coming down, Mr. Lambton said, "By God! I wouldn't have charged that gate on that horse for £1,000." The horse had never been out hunting before, and never appeared again in the hunting field, being sold at York for a pretty good price, and about double his value. A rare thing at the auction there! We had something like twenty minutes from Jordison's Moors at a fast pace before the Elwick Hall run, and met, I believe, at Wolviston that day.

On the following day we were at Redmarshall, and in a splendid gallop fairly "dusted up" the Hurworth country, running to Captain Temple's place, Saltergill, near Yarm; forty-five minutes without a check. A fine old English gentleman was Captain Edward Temple of Saltergill, Yarm; who hunted with us a bit about this time, chiefly on Fridays. A really neat horseman with good hands and a nice seat, and as a rule well mounted on a nearly thoroughbred thirteen stone hunter. A good judge of a horse, and an authority on the bitting of horses. He also had a clean thoroughbred or two. I remember him winning a few races, especially with a good mare called "Mount Grace." I hear that the old gentleman lost his eyesight, and is now no longer alive. The more's the pity, for he was one of nature's gentlemen, and of a sort not to be parted with!

The neighbourhood of Yarm reminds me of Mr. E. R. Whitwell, who, I am told, lives there now; he used to come to us sometimes from Barton, where he lived then, and was always well mounted and eager to be in front at any cost, which sometimes caused a little misunderstanding between himself and his horse; but he never seemed any the worse, and generally contrived to get to the front again at some part of the day. He always rode with a cutting whip, which is not a good thing to take out hunting as a rule, as you cannot open a gate, nor hold one open for those behind you. I always reckoned "heels and hands" would do more than all the cutting whips that ever were invented.

A nice, quiet rider was Mr. George Sutton, son of the Squire of Elton, and a very good gentleman for promoting the interests of the hunt amongst the farmers; he never went in for horseflesh very strongly on his own account, but would often be riding something of Mr. William Armstrong's, or of some friend who lent him one; at any rate he was always to be seen out on a Friday, when his knowledge of the country served him well, and he was invariably to be counted amongst those at the finish of a long run. He had a clinking good grey horse called "Siberia," not perhaps a beauty to look at, but a very hard staying sort, that won a race or two at Sedgefield, and happened an accident at the steeplechases which put an end to his hunting days, and was a sad loss to Mr. George. This would be in the early eighties, I fancy. In the year 1887 Claxon retired, after being with the South Durham thirteen years, and I was sorry when he left, for we always got on so well together, and had been so long associated with hunting work. George Gillson who came in

Claxon's place was a very fine rider, and no mistake, but not quite the huntsman for our country; we had good sport in the November of his only season, especially during the week of November 21st, when we met at Trimdon on the Monday, Travellers' Rest on the Wednesday, and Great Stainton on the Friday. Again at Trimdon on January 25th, 1888, we had two clipping runs, the first of an hour and ten minutes, and the second of forty minutes. Gilson, I remember, rode "Periwinkle" this day, a little bay mare, which I fancy Mr. George Lambton afterwards got to ride as a hack at Newmarket; she was a wonderful good and well made little animal, something after the style of Mrs. Ord's favourite mare "Sweetsound," with short back and broad quarters—a little big 'un. I was mounted on a little chestnut mare—four years old, and not of much account, and she tired pretty soon, but did not come down, though I expected her to do so at every fence towards the finish. On the whole I may say my hunting career was pretty free from accidents; in addition to the slight one already mentioned, I had a nasty one against Humbleknowle covert during Sir William's second mastership. The mare I was riding (an old chestnut mare we got off Mr. R. Denton) swung herself round after jumping a fence, and caught my toe against the gate post (the gate was standing open); I thought I was only stunned for a moment, but when I tried to put my toe into the iron again I found that my leg was broken: so I turned the mare's head, after telling the second whipper in (Jim Hughes) about it, homewards and rode back to Rushyford; on the way my leg swelled, and I thought that I should have to stop to have my boot cut off, but I persevered on and got home, when I had my breeches and boots cut off. George Hirst, a sporting farmer,

and rare good supporter of foxhunting, came up and wanted to pull my boot off, and others wanted to pour whisky down my leg, but I felt so queer that I thought I required a little drop inside me, which no doubt I got. Sir William was very kind to me, and I soon recovered. I would like to mention that Sir William was a good master, and mounted us on good cattle. Lady Eden has also always been very kind to my wife and daughter; the latter a girl of thirteen was very much troubled with severe pains in head and face from her teeth, and her ladyship took her on two occasions to Bishop Auckland, and had them extracted at her own expense; a kindness for which I always have been, and shall for ever be grateful.

Sir William once hunted the hounds himself, when Gillson went away in the spring of 1888 to see about the Cottesmore place, for which he had applied as huntsman. It was in February or March, and in the Friday country. We did very little in the morning, but found a fox at Oxeye whin in the afternoon. Left Sutton's whin on the left and bore to the right making a point for Barker's plantation and Foxhill. He turned to his right at Stonyflat, and looked as if he would try to get to Mr. Joseph Shepherd's* earth at Sadberge, but bore to his right, and left Little Stainton on the left, Bishopton on the right, and got to ground in the main earths at Lee Close, forty-five minutes exactly without a check. There was nothing for a huntsman to do but keep with his hounds, and Sir William certainly did that, for he was alone with them the last twenty minutes, marked his fox to ground, and had come out of the covert when I got up. Unfortunately I fell into a stell below Barker's plantation,

* A downright good sportsman and agriculturalist, especially the latter, and one of the mainstays of the Darlington chamber of Agriculture.

which was half covered with snow. My young chestnut mare did not understand it, came down, and got her foot over the bridle, and in struggling out knocked me tail over tip and got away. She galloped for three fields, and left me to do the best I could. Every hound but one was up at the finish of this first-class run.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Then thanks to the freedom of famed British land,
When reynard's once broken, who dares to command;
The peer, squire and farmer are then all alike,
Whoe'er saw precedence in jumping a dyke?"

ONE of the very keenest men I ever saw was Mr. William Forster (known by his friends as "Billy Forster"), who was, I must say, as a rule, generally mounted on the best of cattle for a very light-weight; when I first remember him he had a fondness for embracing mother earth, and frequently rolled a piece of ground for some one or other, but still not deterred by any obstacle in the chase, he would get up and have another go; always in the best of spirits, with a light heart, and a determination to be in the front rank again, if possible; he was all attention at the covert side, and you never saw him talking, or what I have heard them call "coffee-housing," when hounds were drawing; if he spoke, it was in a whisper; and I 've often seen his intentions of a speech that was barely uttered, by the movements of his lips, when some ignorant riders or foot people were standing where they ought not to have been. If those utterings had been distinct, they would not have been very complimentary, and a good many of them might possibly have begun with a capital D—. Mr. Forster was very fond

of viewing a fox, and got rather excited when he saw a beaten one; which reminds me of a very fine gallop* we had from Bleach House moor, through or by Lee Close, Barmpton whin, the village of Haughton-le-Skerne, and killed just outside Darlington, after forty-five minutes. Just before we got to the young plantations at Skerningham, Mr. Forster viewed the fox in a piece of plough, and came galloping up to me, saying, "By God, yonder he goes Jack." I said, "Hold hard a bit, and keep quiet, I 've seen him long since; we 'll have him directly; didn't you see him going up the bank of the Skerne at Barmpton, where he stopped to shake the water out of his feathers?" But the gallant fox stood up for about other three miles after this, and failing to negotiate the wall into the cemetery, fell back into the hounds' mouths. Old "Agent," a very dark tan hound, pleased me tremendously that day, being the first to hit off the line after crossing the Skerne; he was, I think, by Brocklesby Ranger, out of Actress;—by Brocklesby Ambrose, out of Scandal—and was an extraordinary hound on cold scent, road, footpath or cold fallow. Many a time was he the means of our seeing the end of a good run or a kill, which we would otherwise have had to give up, but for his extraordinary nose and persevering qualities; but at the same time, when there was a scent he was always there. His only fault was a little bit too much tongue, but that 's a fault of not only the canine but also the human tribe!

Mr. Joseph Forster used to hunt as well as his brother, and was a patron of the South Durham on the south side, generally mounted on a good sorty bay, or a dark brown, or rusty chestnut horse; it was a point which colour

* Described in Chapter IV., March 3rd, 1882. Met at Longnewton on October 13th, 1882, when "Agent" equally distinguished himself.

it was, and I wouldn't like to say; these horses carried him well, and I am sorry to hear that he is no longer seen at the covert side, as he always seemed to be of great assistance to the hunt, and in many minor details; and also had, and I hear still has, any amount of foxes on his farm at Seaton Hills, near Thorpe Thewles. There must have been breeds of foxes there for centuries, as there were wagon loads of fresh sand drawn out every spring, when I first came into the country, and had been so to all appearances, and from all accounts, for many years.

Another good sporting gentleman from the neighbourhood of Darlington, or rather Aycliffe to be exactly correct, was Mr. George Chapman, who still appears to be as keen for the chase as ever he was, and as good a preserver of foxes. Through his life's career, Mr. Chapman has generally had a good class of hunter, not on the big side, but clever and up to weight, with the exception perhaps of a bay mare, which, sore against his wish, tried to show her ability over stiff timber at Redworth wood* one morning with the Earl of Zetland's, but, failing to get up high enough, gave Mr. Chapman a severe reminder of the danger of gate jumping, and made him think that he would be safer in a trap; so he readily accepted my offer to change positions with me, as I was driving with Claxon to see hounds throw off. We had the mare at Rushyford, through the kindness of Mr. Chapman, for about a month after this, and converted her into a very clever little huntress.

I remember Mr. J. B. Dale was out that day, riding a

* It is more than likely that this was on November 10th, 1883, when the Earl of Zetland's hounds met at Heighington, and found a fox first outside Redworth whin; drove him through Windlestone, and lost him at Bishop Middleham village; a nice point of over six miles.

very blood-like horse as he usually did, and, being a light weight, he and his horse got on uncommonly well together. The Noble Earl of Zetland was going in his usual forward style, and I think I can remember Mr. Christopher Cradock, the late M.F.H., and his son Captain Sheldon Cradock (as he was then), with a nice seat on a horse. Amongst others I can call to mind Mr. T. Clayhills, who has hunted regularly since I came into the country in 1874, and used to come and see how we were getting on occasionally; a very good sportsman, I should say, and one who has seen a lot of hunting. Also I remember seeing Mr. Richard Hett, brother of the late Mr. John Hett, who was such a fine horseman; the former, I hear, no longer hunts; and Mr. W. R. Innes-Hopkins with some of his family on ponies.

Having just spoken of Mr. W. Forster, reminds me of a day which should have been mentioned before, but it has just occurred to me, and as Mr. Forster took a leading part in it, it will perhaps not be out of place altogether to give an account of it here.—

The meet was at "Travellers' Rest," in Mr. Harvey's time; when Mr. Harvey being in treaty with a farmer named Hart of Allenby, for purchasing a brown mare, he wished me to ride and try her, which I did. We found somewhere about Copelaw, and Mr. Hart, who exchanged horses with me told me to let the mare "have her head" if hounds ran, so I let her loose with Mr. Forster, who had been looking at the mare, and Tommy Dowdeswell, late huntsman to the South Durham as eye-witnesses. I can remember them particularly. We had a capital run of about an hour and forty minutes, through Coldsides, by Mainsforth on the left, through Camp whin, Fishburn to the left, Carrside plantation,

turned to the right underneath old Trimdon, through Humbleknowle, Galley Law plantations, and killed him near Bridge House Farm at Fishburn. As we were coming from Humbleknowle there was an obstacle in the way of a laid fence and small brook, which Mr. Forster was not thoroughly acquainted with, and forgot to put the extra steam on, which caused his horse to land in the brook, and him on his back on the further bank. He was following me, and might not have seen what I was doing, but I think his eye was on Dowdeswell, who knew the place and pulled up. After an hour and thirty minutes, it seemed to be a good trial and performance; at any rate Mr. Forster thought so, and when he caught me up gave me a rare "dressing down" for not telling him about the place, for which I humbly apologised. Although he was in a rare splutter he seemed delighted, and soon began to talk about the mare that I was trying, but I told him straight out that she wasn't any longer for sale, and I need only say that she went right off to Mr. Harvey's stable. Mr. Hart asked me if I'd had a fair trial, and I said that I was very well satisfied with her, and when he began to talk about changing horses and saddles again I said I'd rather ride her back to Hardwick, thinking that he might change and make some alterations in the price. When I acquainted Mr. Harvey with the result of the trial, he told me to stick to the mare, and not get off her back, saying also "Well, now you know, John, I believe you've had a fair good trial," and I said, "By jove, I have!"

Tommy Dowdeswell was on a well-bred, good old horse that had seen better days, but he was a really wonderful horseman for a big man even then, for he would be bordering on to sixty then. He had a good pair of hands on a horse,

and that was his secret and main gift. He was a gallant fellow, too, as he aferwards entered the horse and rode himself at the Sedgefield Steeplechase, and got a roll, too. He came from Lord Macclesfield's and hunted the Durham county for seven seasons, and the South Durham for two seasons. He was huntsman in the year 1871, when the whole of the pack had to be destroyed owing to the outbreak of dumb madness, after which a fresh pack was got together by presents of drafts of odd couples from countries all over England, which accounted for their being rather a scratch lot when I came first into the country in 1874. I have always heard that Dowdeswell was a good man over the country, and had a fine hunting voice, and that he never went better than when mounted on his old favourite "Blueskin,"* which carried him so many seasons; when we came to Hardwick he had "Oatmeal" and "Lightning," and a big brown horse with two white hind legs that Mr. Harvey gave to farmer Waugh of Newtown Ketton in 1875. Tommy Dowdeswell used to crack a lot about "Oatmeal" and "Lightning," and won a jumping prize at Sedgefield with the latter; he was a very good weight carrying hunter, but a trifle slow, and with a cove like me on his back he was lost for want of a turn of speed.

Talking of Sedgefield there was always a sporting lot of farmers and tradesmen in that district; amongst the former was Mr. R. F. Trenholm, of Butterwick, who was

* Mr. Harvey was travelling by rail one day when two young men who were in the same carriage, and strangers to him, began to abuse Dowdeswell alike as a huntsman and horseman. After listening for some time Mr. Harvey turned round and said, "Young men, you may be good riders, and are probably well mounted, but I 'll back Dowdeswell to ride old "Blueskin" against both of you over five miles of fair hunting country, and what is more he shall give you both twenty minutes start!" They looked at each other in silence, and got out of the carriage at the first stopping station!

always fond of a bit of racing and chasing, and a bit of hunting, too, when he had a blood 'un that could jump a bit; his son Jack was a very nice horseman, and used to ride across country at the winter meetings. Poor lad, he died rather too young! Amongst the tradesmen may be mentioned Mr. J. Calvert, the sporting grocer of Sedgefield, who attended meets in the neighbourhood, and was generally mounted on a racing galloway that had passed the post first at a flapping meeting at Spennymoor or Blaydon. He knew a good deal about the legitimate sport, too, and they said he was one of the few who made it pay.

Another keen man in the seventies was Mr. W. O. Wood of Coxhoe, manager of Kelloe pit, a good sportsman with a couple of hunters, or one hunter and a general purpose horse; he did good work in helping to stop the *pit cracks* in the north part of the country. Speaking of pit cracks reminds me of a singular occurrence that happened in the Kelloe country about the end of Mr. Harvey's time, when I believe Mr. Wood was out, and our fox being pressed hard took refuge in a new pit crack which I did not know of at the time. It was in the hard rock and went down about forty feet, and you could see the fox's eyes shining at what seemed to be the bottom. It seemed to be a crack with a kind of steps which made it easy for anyone to get down. Not finding a volunteer to scramble down I took my cap and coat off, and went in. When I got down about ten feet the fox came bounding up on to my leg and shoulder, gave a snack at me as he jumped off my shoulder, and made his escape out of the crack with the hounds close at him. When I got to the top of the crack again the boy, that was walking my mare about (for it was a cold day) had mounted, and was off full cry after the hounds,

but fortunately for him the old chestnut mare wouldn't take some rails, and also for me, for I was left coatless and capless, as the man who had taken my clothes had likewise made off after the hounds; however, I ran two fields, caught up the man with the coat and cap, and the boy with the mare, and was soon on again, and joined the hounds at Kelloe banks, where we changed foxes, and the hero of the pit crack got clean away.

Doctor Blandford also lived between Coxhoe Bridge and Coxhoe Village, and frequently had a day with us when at liberty. He was exceedingly fond of the sport, and could tell a very good story on sporting items, but not quite, perhaps, up to his neighbour, Mr. W. O. Wood, who, on a bad scenting or slack day, would keep his friends amused and in good spirits with any amount of stories of all kinds, and to suit all tastes, generally in connection with pit life. Dr. Blandford had a wonderful grey mare which he called "Louie." At awkward places he would dismount, and she would follow him over like a dog. It didn't matter where he went, over or through, she likewise went, and no doubt he found it very useful in going his rounds, as she would stick to him like a leech. I fancy Robert Raine of Cowley Houses had the mare at one time, and drove her for some years. Yet another good sportsman from that side was Mr. Thomas Ford, the wood merchant of Shincliffe, who generally rode a useful hunter, especially one called "Music," on which he saw a lot of sport, though he didn't pretend to "bruize" over the country. He was also a patron of the North Durham after Mr. Harvey's retirement, as I once met him at Ferry-hill Station, and he gave me a good account of the North Durham Monday's sport at the latter part of cub-hunting. I was waiting for a parcel at the station on the Wednesday,

on which day we had very good sport and killed a brace of cubs, which I narrated to him, and not knowing that there was a reporter of the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* standing by and listening to all we said, was surprised to read in next morning's paper a full account of the two packs' doings exactly as we had related the incidents to each other! I have no doubt Mr. Ford was equally amused and surprised. I remember that the good mare "Music" broke down near "Dolly Cook's" in the North part of the country, and had to be destroyed.

A gentleman that used to have occasional days with us was Mr. C. Hayes Jackson of Darlington, who generally had his own boots and spurs ready if he could find anyone with a horse that wanted pushing along or schooling a bit, as he dearly loved to be on the back of a young thoroughbred that hadn't seen much of hounds, and wanted a bit of handling, and it was wonderful how he got over the country with some of his mounts. He would sometimes tie a horse's leg up when run in a tight corner with a headstrong young one, but this was very exceptional, and always enabled him to get to the bottom of him.

A great admirer of Mr. Harvey was Mr. Joseph Flavell of Sedgefield, and latterly of Layton, who always boasted that he had hunted with Mr. Ralph Lambton and was very proud of it; he was a good sporting farmer and auctioneer, and likewise a good fox preserver, as he generally had two litters of cubs on his farm. He walked a puppy or two, and sported pink and brown tops in the good old-fashioned style, making no secret of it that he did not go to London either for his clothes, hat or boots! On one occasion he greatly soiled a new red coat by coming to grief in a black bog near Carrside plantation, and I heard him lamenting

about the misfortune, so volunteered to give it a real good cleaning if he would send it up to the kennels, which he did; I gave it a good soaking, scouring and thorough cleaning, and returned it in a condition which pleased the old gentleman immensely; he used to tell an amusing story about himself, once on a very cold day putting down three small glasses of cherry-brandy at Mr. Richard Forster's and then riding home to Sedgefield; when near home he had to dismount, as he found the nectar flying to his head, and finished on foot, leading his horse. Mr. Flavell was very hospitable, and always had something ready for the field and hunt servants, and my recollection goes back to many pleasant calls at his house, and more especially to one occasion, when he invited us to call on our way home after a hard and cold day's hunting. Unfortunately when we arrived the cellar key was wanting, and it turned out that the old lady had, by mistake, taken it with her to Stockton in her pocket, much to Mr. Flavell's and our disappointment.

Mention of Mr. Flavell reminds me of old Bob Higgins of West Layton, a very grand old sporting farmer, who used to hunt and ride a bay pony cob; he was a real foxhunter and came, I think, from Claygills, near Stockton-on-Tees. What a good puppy walker "Bob" was, and what interest he took in it!

William Salmon, the chemist of Stockton, and his brother John, of Elton (who is, I am told, as keen as ever), were also good puppy men and fond of seeing hunting, generally on *shanks's pony* or in a conveyance; it didn't matter which so long as they were there. Talking of carriages, familiar faces at Foxhill were those of Mr. Anthony Maynard (who took to wheels when he could no longer ride) and Mr. John Wood, of Darlington, generally accompanied by one or two

ladies; on foot you would always see Mr. Leonard Parrington, brother, I think, of Mr. Tom Parrington, the well-known judge of horses, hounds and everything connected with the sport of foxhunting. Everyone has his favourite covert. At Camp whin you would always find an old standard from Coxhoe, whose name I cannot recall, but he had a red face, wore a brown suit, and always had spats on. Then there was old Mr. Menzies of Quarrington Hill, whom you would always see up there, a good old fox preserver, delighted to see the hounds, and always ready with a bit of chaff if they didn't have a kill; he was the father of Mr. James, who farmed at Sands farm for several years, and is now clerk of the course at Shincliffe; and of Mr. George Menzies, the well-known rider and trainer of racehorses at Cassop. Speaking of trainers reminds me of John Coates of Sedgefield, for many years trainer to the late Marquis Talon, and formerly to the late Earl of Zetland, in the days when he had a lot of good horses. John was not particularly fortunate with the Marquis Talon's horses, but beyond "Triumvir" and "Knight of Ruby" that I can remember I don't think that he had much to work upon, and without the raw material you cannot do much good. The Marquis Talon used to come to the meet sometimes, more I think with a view of getting a certificate for a young hunter than to take part in the sport, as after letting fly at one or two hounds the blood ones were carefully packed off home, and I always was pleased to see the last of them; but I do not wish to say that the Marquis was not a good sportsman, as I have always heard that he was a regular John Bull at racing, and most popular amongst all classes on a racecourse.

Having mentioned William Armstrong I should say that he was educated at a good old school, having been with the

Stephensons of Hart, already alluded to as the breeders of "Voltigeur." After getting up into manhood he took to butchering and horse dealing at Stockton. That 's his pedigree! His education in horseflesh stood him in good stead, and he seemed to have a successful business from the first. Being fond of foxhunting, and a good bold rider, he soon got hold of some useful hunters, which included amongst others a very good dun horse, which was an extra-ordinary timber jumper, and a very wonderful horse over any description of country. This horse he let out or lent on trial to Sir William Eden, who took him down to Cheshire, and liked him so much that he bought him, although he was, as a rule, a little bit shakey after hunting; but Stroud, who was Sir William's stud groom and in my opinion a very clever fellow, put him under a very severe form of blistering which proved successful, and completely cured him of the slight unsoundness which he seemed to have before, and he carried his new master several seasons most satisfactorily. I rode him one night for a bit, but was only like a postage stamp on him, as he flew everything with me; I thought he looked round once or twice to see if there was anyone on his back!

Mr. Armstrong was fond of a gallery jump at times when on the show, and sometimes got a cropper through it; I remember once at White Horse Gill, near Norton, we were running along the bottom, and when coming to a piece of stiffish timber in a gateway (it was a young ash tree), he shouts out "Go on, Jack, and knock her down." I replied "if you are in a big hurry have a go at at it yourself." I meant getting off and unhitching it, but Armstrong never liked to be beaten, especially when chaffed a bit, and went for it; but there being a little

bone in the ground after frost, his horse slipped, and landed poor Armstrong with a broken or, I believe, properly speaking, a dislocated ankle, which paralized him for the rest of the season, for which I was very sorry, as he was such a good helper in the sport of foxhunting, and would do anything to push the sport by talking to the farmers, and also in soothing the sorrows of the ladies in the poultry line, as he always seemed to be very popular with them. With the clever assistance of his lad, Dick Humble, who was a really fine quiet horseman in the hunting field, able to make a hunter without doing the slightest damage to crops or fences, and a right hand man at home, Mr. Armstrong was able to produce a lot of good hunters, and command a good price.

The good horse "Bailiff" (a dun), which he sold to Sir William Eden, Bart., was really an extraordinary natural jumper, and it was towards the end of Sir William's second mastership, in the Spring of 1888, that there occurred a noteworthy run, which put an end to the brilliant career of poor "Bailiff," who had carried his owner right bang in the front, when hounds ran hard, for seven seasons without a fall; quite a marvellous performance, and a sort of record in its way, I should imagine. On this day a fox was found in a field near Standalone by Mr. Peter Smitton, the trusty head-keeper at Windlestone, who knew the lying ground of this fox, and he went away with plenty of smell

* "Bailiff," the dun horse (hence his name), was bred at Stockton-on-Tees, and was by old "Omen," out of a dun pony that used to run in a "candy cart," and was said to be by "Croton Oil." Mr. W. Armstrong bought him when four years old from Mr. Tom Robinson, the butcher, and once well-known cricketer; in fact one of "the Stockton Toms" (in the days of Dr. Richardson), who, in conjunction with the late Mr. Tom Hornby, the respected auctioneer, and Tom Darnton, played the famous single wicket match against the Cambridgeshire Cracks—Tom Hayward and Carpenter. Mr. Armstrong rode "Bailiff" five seasons without a fall of any sort, and then sold him to Sir William Eden, who rode him seven seasons without a fall; I have never heard of a safer conveyance than this.

behind him past Nunstainton and Sedgefield Station, where he crossed the Clarence railway. The Master and Mr. Briggs jumped in and out of the line, and had by far the best of the gallop over the cream of the Sedgefield country, leaving Sands Hall and the Racecourse on the left, and pointing straight for the Wynyard woods, reached in forty minutes; luckily, for some reason, the fox now turned sharp back, and stuck almost to the identical line he had come, by Layton Lings, Watts' moor, Bog Hall, Stillington moors, Morden south side, Gibson's farm (where a colley seized him), and Harpington lane, where Gillson viewed him, eventually getting to ground just in front of hounds near Bradbury Village, after a fine run of over two hours. Poor "Bailiff," who had never gone in more brilliant style all through the gallop, broke down near the end of it, on the farm of Mr Graham of Morden, who was attracted to the spot by Sir William's language,† and has not yet forgotten the incident, and says that he will never forget it if he lives to be as old as Methusaleh.

† Perhaps the most graphic description of the breakdown is conveyed by Sir William's own characteristic words to me recently, which are re-produced *verbatim* :—"I did not see the finish because my horse 'Bailiff' broke down near Sands, and my curses were heard in Bradbury and Morden Villages, and the grass has never grown in the field since; I never rode 'Bailiff' again, and he carried me seven seasons without a fall." The fox was found dead in Bradbury wood next day, with a bite in his shoulder.

CHAPTER XV.

"Come, pull out the corks and fill up the cups,
Let 's toast with all honours the ' walkers of pups ' ;
And drink to that mortal, whatever his rank,
Whose heart heaves a sigh when his covert 's drawn blank."

OTHER good tenant farmers and puppy walkers, and there were any amount of them, were the Robinsons, Charles, Dick and Fred, who, as a rule, competed against each other for the prize puppies; more often than not the money fell to Charles' share, as he had no other family to look after but his puppies, and took great pride in turning them out in tip-top style; Dick had no family, too, but his better-half paid more attention to the poultry and calves than seemed to be necessary, as the foxhound puppies only played second fiddle in her management; but Mrs. Fred was a good lover of foxhounds and sport all round, but unfortunately had a lot of bairns to draw her off occasionally. Charley was as well known as his chestnut mare, "Pigeon," with which he won a selling race at Sedgefield, but never could get first past the post for the farmer's race, though he often competed, but did not ride himself. I rode once for him, and the old thing finding the ground too hard for her shelly feet, didn't care about the drop over the quick

fence by Sands Hall, and took no further part in the proceedings. Dick, more fortunate than his brothers, had a good little brown mare on short legs called "Sledmere," bred by Sir Tatton Sykes, with which he won a little farmer's race at some of the meetings. She was a clinking little huntress over a country.

I must not neglect Mr. "Willie" Walker of Copelaw, a prince of fox preservers, and never known to send in a poultry bill. He didn't hunt except on foot, but if Copelaw (his covert) was drawn blank his face was like a person who had taken a dose of salts! He liked to be to the front with his foxhound puppy, which accompanied him everywhere, especially to church where he would hide him under the pew seat sometimes at Aycliffe. He was a champion ploughman in his day, and still, I hear, prides himself as much as ever on being a champion fox preserver. Long may he continue so. I remember as if it was to-day that he took a prominent part in a good young African donkey hunt. It happened in this way: "Mr. Bronk," which belonged to a gentleman in the district, was running out one autumn day in Willie Walker's fields. We were riding through the field exercising the hounds just previous to commencing cub-hunting, and "Mr. Bronk," who was a black beast, seeing an unusual sight, blew his horn both loud and shrill, which excited a sporting little fox-terrier we had with us (and which was, I believe, one of Mr. John Straker's game breed, and given by him to Claxon). Off went "Crab" after the "moke," who was a smart little chap, and could gallop when terrified, throwing his tongue for all he was worth, which gave us a short exciting chase for a few minutes, as the young un-entered hounds joined in the fun, and ran him to ground in Willie Walker's arms before we

got them fairly stopped. Claxon was riding Mr. Ord's old chestnut pony "Gipsy," and I was on "Stewardess," who was frightened to death when the donkey trumpeted, and did nothing but rear, so I could not get near them, and they soon got out of Claxon's hounds. Willie laughed; indeed, it was "game pie" for him. This little run of ours on the quiet was kept very snug for a time, but it afterwards oozed out, and a well-known local farmer and fox preserver, who "let it out," used to chaff us when we had a difficulty in finding a fox, that he would fetch our old friend of the "Copelaw run," as he used to humourously term it.

Whilst on the donkey tack I may say that there is nothing so troublesome as a stupid donkey to a pack of foxhounds, and so annoying to hunt servants. One in particular belonged to an underkeeper at Wynyard, called Freestone, and whenever the hounds were in the neighbourhood of Wynyard he was bound to be in the midst of it, and on several occasions he would hunt with us all day, and follow us home to the kennels at night. He could get over, under or through any place, and nothing but a locked gate or door would keep him back. I used to get my whip round his neck and drag him away to some place where we could get him shut up, but unless really under lock and key he would get out again, and turn up as great a nuisance as ever. The keeper used to ride him in the woods, and use him for carrying ferrets or rabbits or such like jobs, and probably had him tethered somewhere in the woods, when he would break loose somehow or other and join us. Of course if he knew for certain that we were coming he would keep him in the stable. If Freestone couldn't hear tell of him being shut up at a farm house or what not, he would come to the kennels, knowing that he would probably have followed us

home. That was a clever, active little donkey, and *would* be in, over, or through, whatever the obstacle.

A good jovial sort was Mr. Clark Nesom, better known as "Clarkie" Nesom of Whitton, who walked several useful puppies but never had the good luck to finish in the first three; he was a well known figure at the meets on his old white pony "Charlie"—that at the finish must have been close on thirty—and was known all over the country side; it is astonishing how game ponies are and how long they live, and I can never forget that old pony of old Mr. Dawson's at Park Head; a fine old gentleman of the old school and thorough foxhunter in younger days was old Mr. Dawson, and he has often told me that he got the grey pony, thirteen hands high, before he was married; it was three years old when he went courting on it; and afterwards taught all his family to ride, one or other of whom was always on it when we met in the locality, and what it couldn't get over, it got through or under; it was still going with the hounds with young George up (and riding, probably, twelve stones) after he had been married thirty years; and the old gentleman used to say that it was the least expensive horse as regards corn that he ever had, and I don't suppose it got much to his knowledge, but I have an idea that he had some good friends in the family who gave him a bit on the sly; I believe he was forty-four years of age* when he died. The old gentleman also had another great favourite in the form of a fox terrier, also called "Charlie," which he valued more than anything

* This is an extraordinary age even for a pony, but Mr. Dawson's son only a few weeks ago assured me that he died about ten years ago, when within two weeks of his forty-fifth birthday! I knew the pony in 1882, when old Mr. Dawson said he was thirty-three, and had never tasted corn in his life. Young Mr. Dawson hunted him when thirty-nine.

in the world, I believe, and it certainly was a trimmer underground, as we bolted many a fox out of the conduits in Bishop Auckland Park, which could only be done by a master of his art, the drains being so long and numerous. Mr. Dawson used to go with me on non-hunting days and pointed out the run of all the drains, and likewise marked them at all spots where we could take the cover off and put in a terrier and bolt them out, as foxes usually stay in the dry stone conduits, and could not be worked in any other way; I 've seen a leash bolt out of one culvert, but they generally hung about the park or got to ground in the Wear banks. Speaking of Bishop Auckland reminds me of Mr. Dundas Bruce, the sporting solicitor there, who was, I think, introduced to foxhunting by that good sportsman, Dr. Fenwick, and had a fine, weight-carrying chestnut horse, with remarkably high withers. Mr. Bruce was fond of the sport, and for a few seasons was an ideal foxhunter, but his shortness of sight seemed to be a great drawback to him, as he was compelled to hunt in spectacles, and I shall never forget him taking his first lesson in deep sea fishing in an old pond or moat in a little plantation near the Mill wood, Rushyford, and just north of the Leasingthorne line. He slipped off the sloping clayey bank, and went clean overhead, and came up again covered with yellow mud from head to foot, and his spectacles were still there, but he couldn't see a thing owing to the mud, and stood roaring with laughter on the bank, while we fished his horse out. Being not far from Merrington, where he lived, he wisely made his exit from the sport, for he hadn't a dry thing on him.

Dr. McCullagh was another "good man and true" hailing from Bishop Auckland, and had a clinking good

horse, a brown weight-carrying hunter, which I believe he afterwards sold to Sir William Eden; he also had a bay mare, a very good huntress once, on which he used to see a lot of sport, as he took his falls (when he got them) like a man, and got up again as well as he could with a cheerful smile on his countenance to join, if possible, the front rank; I am very glad that his *gameness* is inherited by his sons, more than one of whom has distinguished himself when fighting for his country, and I have no doubt but that they are all made of the good staying material, or stuff, that fox-hunters invariably are. But I haven't quite finished yet the list of good puppy walkers, for there was Mr. Hird of Brierton, a good all-round sporting farmer, not often in the saddle, but keeping a good eye over his coverts, and never so pleased as when he saw a fox break away. This was in the early seventies, for the family gave up farming and cart-horse breeding long ago; and his son James has been farm-bailiff at Sands Hall for the last twenty years and is greatly respected by his brother agriculturalists. Another son, Anthony, was a great pal of "Clarkie" Nesom's, and a lively pair they were twenty years or more ago; they would often be seen at the meets of the hounds, but were always thirsty before hounds threw off, and this caused them to lose many a run.

A rare man to talk was Henry Callender of Bishopton upon sport and topics of any kind; and he would beckon any sportsman, passing his house in hunting costume, to come in and join him in a glass; as indeed did most of the South Durham farmers,† who are nothing if they are not

† "Their daughters are pretty,
Their wives are all charmers;
A grand sporting lot,
The South Durham farmers!"

hospitable, and don't like anyone to pass without a salute—generally a liquid one. Another good old sort of a farmer was Mr. Dent of Goosepool, one of a very sporting breed, who both race and hunt, and always have a nice horse or two. I believe all the family were nailing good dancers.

Rare men were the Hardys of West House, Trimdon—father and three sons. John, who lives there now, and had once a good brown mare that he sold to Mr. James Cookson, master of the Hurworth Hounds; Robert (who took his degree in Mr. Appleby's office) who had a good dark chestnut mare and was very keen to hounds; and William, who farms somewhere near West Hartlepool, and had a brown horse by "Omega," one of the biggest jumpers I ever saw, especially for such a strong horse, but he was a little bit after my time, though I have seen him. Young John was as keen as mustard for a bit of hunting before his accident on January 16th, 1878, when he broke his ribs over a great strong piece of timber in a gateway, that knocked poor John's light out so far as hunting was concerned. Though it is six-and-twenty years ago I can distinctly remember all about it, and was riding "Bob" Stephenson's grand old horse "Gameboy" that afternoon. Robert and William both promised well in the hunting field, but I am sorry to hear that they retired, either from the claims of business or ill-health.

Young Tom Crow, of Crow's Moor, was bad to beat over a country when he rode "Beaconsfield," afterwards purchased by Mr. John Beach, of Foggyfurze, who converted him into a steeplechaser, and I should have ridden him at Sedgefield, but for the accident I had on Mr. Stephenson's "Gameboy" in a previous race, and for which I have to thank old "Pigeon," Charley Robinson's chestnut mare, alluded to before. Boag rode "Beaconsfield" instead of me, and got the

stakes; he was a really splendid hunter, and could gallop and jump till everything else was silly; for his size and make he was one of the best hunters I ever saw, but, of course, he was not qualified to carry more than eleven or twelve stone. He, Tom Crow, was another good specimen of a South Durham Hunt puppy walker; likewise his neighbour, Mr. Lee of Low Raisby. We were going to Kelloe one morning for cub-hunting, in Mr. Ord's mastership, and were crossing one of Lee's fields where they were harvesting, when the horses, catching sight of the hounds, bolted on the top of the hill, threw young Lee off the machine, the knives of which were broken; at the foot of the hill, on a cinder path, the boy that was riding the near horse fell off, fortunately clear of the machine, with which the horses jumped a clipped thorn fence into a grass meadow, with a drop of several feet; it is extraordinary how the horses escaped injury, as the pole stuck in the ground and was holding the reaper in the air; the horses breaking themselves free, escaped without a scratch. A fund was immediately started for a new machine to replace the old one, and responded to on the spot, and a week or two later no one was any worse for the accident.

Talking of accidents we had several occurred to hounds from various causes whilst I was with the South Durham, In the first place we lost in 1874-5 a couple of hounds in a culvert just below Heighington. One did get out alive, but much damaged, and we had to put him down; the other one was afterwards washed out dead, the fox, undoubtedly escaping by means of a smaller drain up which the hounds could not get. Another time we lost two bitches in the same country, owing to their getting fast in a large culvert, into which they followed their fox. The following day we

spent the whole of the day (me and Claxon) trying to find the line of the conduit, and dug several holes five or six feet deep, but could not do any good as no one in the locality knew anything about the direction the culvert ran in, and it was too deep to follow up right through, so we had to leave them, and heard that after the first flood both hounds and fox were washed out dead into the road. We had a bitch called "Promise" that happened a curious accident in the east country. She was crossing the railway while a coal train was passing slowly; the wheel caught her stern somehow, and cut it almost off about six or eight inches from the root; it was just hanging on by a piece of skin, which I cut off, and, as she was a real good bitch, we kept her a season or two, much to the delight of some of the sporting fraternity, who used to come up to me and say (very pleased with themselves) "I see you've got the old short tailed bitch out again, Jack." Several other slight accidents occurred on the railway, but perhaps the greatest loss of all was when two couples of hounds, coursing their fox in vew after a clinking run near Quarrington Hill, went down an old disused airshaft of a pit on November 26th, 1884. Heugh Hall pit shaft—at least that is what they said it was—with a certain amount of water in it; it was just simply railed round, with thorn bushes and grass growing round the top of it; the fox undoubtedly went to ground in the earth which we could trace at the top of the shaft, but the leading hounds unfortunately went down into the dark shaft, whilst we had to content ourselves by listening to them swimming and splashing about in the water twenty fathoms or more below, unable to render any assistance, as we could not see the bottom. The sound that came up was just like a peal of bells ringing as the poor beasts found a momentary

"JACK RESURRECTED"—1903.

foothold as it were against the side, and cried out. It was a terrible time as no one dare go down with the old ropes and appliances we had, though one cove bolder than the rest tried to look down, and was hanging by the slender branch of a thorn bush which looked ugly, so I seized him, and pulled him back, telling that there was plenty down already without him. We heard sounds of them for quite thirty-five minutes, as we took the time carefully directly we checked, and did not leave until all was perfectly still again, There were, of course, some of the best hounds in the pack thus destroyed, as they were all at the head of affairs. Old "Lively"* was one of them, and I always considered her the worst tempered foxhound I ever saw.

At Monkhessleden Dene a bitch called "Wishful,' which was shown as an unentered bitch in the Yorkshire Hound Show, held at Skipton-in-Craven, but was beaten by a bitch from the Quorn, fell over a precipice when in pursuit of a fox and broke her leg, and, of course, had to be destroyed. Once near Coxhoe Hall the body of the pack we had out, when in full cry and pressing their fox hard, went over a rocky precipice into a quarry, a fall of thirty feet or more, and wonderful to say they came out with very little damage, only one or two being slightly lame, but how they escaped I have always considered nothing short of miraculous. We lost a few fox terriers at times in the culverts and pit cracks, either from getting fast in the pipe, or stopping the water and so being drowned. Old Chester II. had a narrow escape or two. He just missed going down that pit shaft with the unlucky two couples of hounds, and though he was rather a big shouldered

* The others were "Damper," "Larkspur' and "Wildair."

dog could work his way any distance down a nine inch pipe, and several times had narrow squeaks through being punished severely, as he was rather too big when in the pipe to have a fair chance with an old fox. I once saw him draw a fox in a nine inch sanitary pipe down the Darlington road, near Sedgefield; an old big dog fox which we found in the Bath plantation at Sands Hall, and he held him until the hounds smashed him up. It was the cleanest draw I ever saw in my life, and Chester II. was the best fox terrier in this particular line that I ever saw or shall see. The old dog at last got badly bitten by a rat, and his head swelled up to such a size that I was obliged to put the old fellow down—which went very much against the grain. We lost a good bitch on the railway near Simpasture, in 1884 or 1885, I cannot remember her name, though I know it began with R, and that she was one of a litter of eight—all of which were entered to fox, and all of which were good foxhounds. I never saw a better or smarter litter; they were by the Belvoir Templar (1874) out of Rakish (1876), a smart bitch by the Brocklesby Rocket. The names of the litter were Ranter, Roman, Regent, Rachel, Raffle, Redrose, Ready, and Ruin. Rachel was the first prize bitch of her year (1882), and walked by "Charley" Robinson, of the brakes Farm, Sedgefield, who thought more of her than all his worldly goods; they were all good-looking, right through the lot. Templar, their sire, Mr. Ord got from the Belvoir Kennels,* when he was over there one summer, and he also got little Wonder (own brother to Weatherguage), who did a lot of good in the kennels, though he was on the small side; still he was handsome as paint.

* Frank Gillard was the huntsman of the Belvoir Hounds, and I take this opportunity of acknowledging many good services on his part in the way of advice in the selection of Sires, &c.

We used to get some curious claims for damage at times by foxes and otherwise, though, of course, I had nothing to do with them in any way; but Claxon showed me some which I entered into my diary. The following is an exact copy of a letter and bills sent in, I fancy, to Claxon himself to be forwarded by him to the paymaster:—

Dear Sir,—The Relicks* of the enclosed porcell will be sufficient evidence to show to you that the bills are not made up to defraud the Honorable gentlemen of the South Durham Hunt.

Hoping the accounts will soon be paid for the sake of the foxes lives; there are a few fine ones. Spare them if possible. Get paid. I am appointed agent round here by many farmers as agent for the protection of hens, ducks and lambs. The farmers are not strong perhaps; early payment will suit.

Your humble servant,
JOHN ELLIOTT.

THE PAYMASTER OF THE SOUTH DURHAM HUNT.

To Miss Watson, of Woodland Close, per John Elliott, Agent. Dr.

1876.

To 2 ducks and eggs	0	10	6
„ 6 hens, two old ones	0	17	4½
„ Goose getting a fright by the fox, and refusing to sit her eggs for her time, spoilt eggs, etc.	2	0	0
	£3	7	10½

WHITE HURWORTH, May 9th, 1876.

THE PAYMASTER OF THE SOUTH DURHAM HUNT.

To John Elliott.

To 1 Guinea hen	1	1	0
„ 50 eggs prospective	0	10	6½
„ 1 well bred ewe lamb	2	17	6½
„ 1 horse aged	11	19	11½
„ a quantity of hens and ducks	2	1	2½
	£18	10	3

* The "relicks of the enclosed porcell" were a quantity of ducks' and hens' wings. Carriage of parcel not prepaid. The latter bill looks very like a "goak." The "Horse, aged," is a real piece of humour. Indeed the whole affair has a "soupcon" of being "writ ironical"—(a queer catalogue of Fox's martyrs).

Old John Elliott of White Hurworth was a queer old beggar, and not a bad sort either, being a rare sportsman weighing twenty stones. He used to make a special dish of boar ham, which, as a rule, is not very good for the teeth, but by rapid feeding he made it more tender, and I remember Dr. Blandford and Mr. Tom Ford calling there and having a dish of boar ham one cold, snowy day after a good run from Quarrington Hill to Monkhesseldon Dene. Many years ago old John Elliott used to breed and sell a lot of pigs and he was once paid for some entirely in coppers because he wouldn't bate a bit in his price or give any "back money." The amount was several pounds. I don't know why, but the mention of old John Elliott's name has brought to my memory one Robert Wilson, the cobbler of Bishop Middleham, to whom Mr. Harvey gave an old horse. "Bob" Wilson, as they all called him, was a notorious fox-hunter, and told wonderful tales of the sport in his own style, but it really only did for those who knew no better. Claxon used to be a bit taken in by his stories, but I always said that there was a good deal of "blash" about him. Just such another was old Tom Bowran of Ferryhill, an old mole-catcher, with a rare slippery tongue.

And now I think that my story is done. I have taxed my memory fairly well, but with the assistance of diaries, etc., think that the facts and dates are pretty correct; still it has been a kind of "resurrection" for me after being dead to hunting for nearly fifteen years. I have been groom, gardener, and brickmaker during that time, and now after a short spin in the hunting field again, and once more having had my "phiz" taken in full hunting costume, I must make my bow and retire to a less exciting sphere. It is my hope and trust that I have said nothing to wound the feelings of

anyone; my object has been at least to please (I could hardly expect to amuse), and my only ambition is to have a still kindly feeling extended towards me by those in whose sport I once tried to assist. I always had a host of friends, more especially amongst the farmers in the South Durham country; indeed I verily believe that my* greatest faults were due to having *too many*.

* In reading the reminiscences, I would say to all:—

"Be to 'Jack's' virtues ever kind,
And to his faults a little blind."

Just as I am correcting this proof, a letter arrives from Mr. Robert Worrall, late huntsman of the V.W.H. (see pages 105, 109), in which he says, "I have always said Jack Bevans was the best whipper-in *I ever saw*," a sentiment with which I am entirely in accord.

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